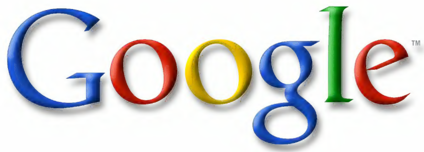
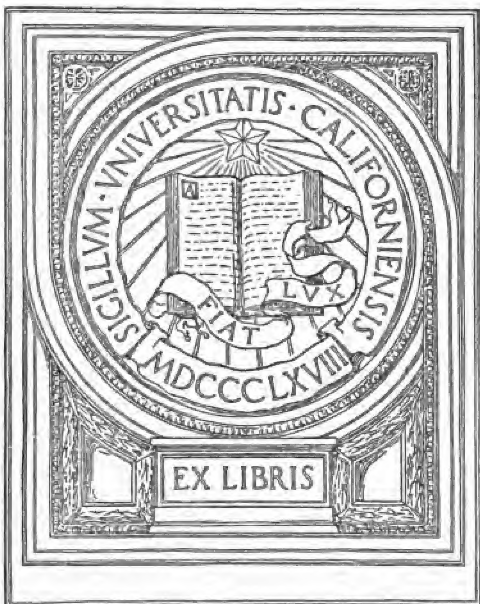

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A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION IN ANCIENT INDIA.

A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION IN ANCIENT INDIA,

BASED ON SANSCRIT LITERATURE.

BY

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AND OTHER WORKS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

VEDIC AND EPIC AGES.

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TO

MY GENTLE AND LOVING DAUGHTERS,

KAMALĀ & BIMALĀ,

WHO HAVE CHEERED MY LABOURS AND BLESSED

MY LIFE

WITH THEIR AFFECTION,

I DEDICATE THIS WORK WITH A FATHER'S LOVE.

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PREFACE.

"IF I were asked," says Professor Max Müller, "what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the Nineteenth Century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line: —

Sanscrit, DYAUSH PITAR = Greek, ΖΕΥΣΠΑΤΗΡ (ZEUS PATER) = Latin, JUPITER = Old Norse, TYR."

And certainly, the discoveries which have been made by European scholars within the last hundred years, with the help of the old Aryan language preserved in India, form one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of the advancement of human knowledge. It is not my intention to give a sketch of that history here; but a few facts which relate specially to Indian Antiquities may be considered interesting.

It is about a century since Sir William Jones startled the scholars of Europe by his translation of Sakuntalâ "one of the greatest curiosities," as he said in his preface, "that the literature of Asia has yet brought to light," and one of the tenderest and most beautiful creations of human imagination produced in any age

or country. The attention of European literary men was roused to the value and beauty of Sanscrit literature; and the greatest literary genius of the modern age has recorded his appreciation of the Hindu dramatic piece in lines which have been often quoted, in original and in translation :—

"Wouldst thou the life's young blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is pleased, enraptured, feasted, fed,—
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sweet name combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntalâ, and all at once is said."—*Göethe.*

Sir William Jones translated Manu, founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and lived to continue his researches into the store-house of Sanscrit literature, and achieved valuable results; but he did not live to find what he sought,—a clue to India's "ancient history without any mixture of fable." For his enthusiastic labours were mostly confined to the later Sanscrit literature,—the literature of the Post-Buddhist Era; and he paid little heed to the mine of wealth that lay beyond.

Colebrooke followed in the footsteps of Sir William Jones. He was a mathematician, and was the most careful and accurate Sanscrit scholar that England has ever produced. Ancient Sanscrit literature concealed nothing from his eyes. He gave a careful and accurate account of Hindu Philosophy, wrote on Hindu Algebra and Mathematics, and in 1805, he first made Europeans acquainted with the oldest work of the Hindu and of the Aryan world, viz., the Vedas. Colebrooke,

however, failed to grasp the importance of the discovery he had made, and declared that the study of the Vedas "would hardly reward the labour of the reader much less that of the translator."

Dr. H. H. Wilson followed in the footsteps of Colebrooke; and although he translated the Rig Veda Sanhitâ into English, his labours were mostly confined to later Sanscrit literature. He translated into elegant English the best dramatic works in Sanscrit, as well as the beautiful poem of Kâlidâsa, called "Meghadûta." He also translated the Vishnu Purâna, and laboured to adjust the history of the later Hindu period, and settled many points on a satisfactory basis.

In the meantime, a great genius had arisen in France. The history of oriental scholarship contains no brighter name than that of Burnouf. He traced the connection between the Zend and the Vedic Sanscrit, and framed a Comparative Grammar for his own use before German scholars had written on Comparative Grammar. By such means he deciphered the Zend language and scriptures, elucidated the Rig Veda, and shewed its true position in the history of Aryan nations. Versatile as he was profound, he also deciphered the Cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria, and thus earned for himself an undying fame in Europe. And further, in his Introduction to Buddhism, he gave the first philosophical and intelligible account of that great religion. His lessons created a deep sensation in Europe during nearly

a quarter of a century (1829 to 1852), and left a lasting impression on the minds of admiring and enthusiastic pupils in Paris, some of whom, like Roth and Max Müller, lived to be the profoundest Vedic scholars of our age.

German scholars, in the meantime, had commenced their labours; and when once they began work in this line, they soon excelled and even ousted all other labourers in the field of Indian Antiquities! Rosen, the contemporary and friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, published the first Ashtaka of the Rig Veda, with a Latin translation, but his untimely death prevented the further progress of the work.

But the most eminent German scholars of the day set before themselves a higher task; and the industry, perseverence, and genius of men like Bopp, Grimm, and Humboldt soon achieved a result which ranks as one of the noblest and most brilliant discoveries of the century. They marked and traced the connection among all the Indo-European languages,—the Sanscrit, the Zend, the Greek, the Latin, the Slav, the Tuton, and the Celtic,—they demonstrated all these languages to be the offshoots of the same original stock, and they even discovered the laws under which words were transformed in passing from one language to another. Classical scholars of the day, who believed that all civilization and culture began with the Greek and the Latin, at first smiled and ridiculed, then stood aghast,

and ultimately gave way with considerable chagrin and anger to the irresistible march of Truth!

The desire to elucidate ancient Hindu literature and history deepened among scholars as they became more thoroughly alive to the value of Sanscrit. Roth, one of the profoundest Vedic scholars of the century, produced his edition of Yâska with his most valuable notes, and later on he published, with Whitney, an edition of the Atharva Veda, and completed, with Böehtlingk, the most accurate and comprehensive Sanscrit Dictionary yet written; Lassen published his profound work, Indische Alterthumskunde, displaying a deep learning and accurate scholarship which has seldom been excelled; Weber published the White Yajur Veda with its Brâhmana and Sûtras, elucidated many obscure points of Ancient Hindu History in his Indische Studient, and gave the first clear and comprehensive account of Sanscrit literature in his History of Indian Literature; Benfey published a most valuable edition of the Sâma Veda, of which an edition, with translation, had been published by Stevenson and Wilson before; and Muir collected the most suggestive and historically-valuable texts from Sanscrit literature, in five volumes, which are a monument of his industry and learning.

And lastly, Professor Max Müller mapped out the whole of the ancient Sanscrit literature chronologically in 1859.

More valuable to Hindus than this great work—more valuable than the learned Professor's numerous works and contributions on Language, Religion, and Mythology, is his magnificent edition of the Rig Veda Sanhitâ, with Sâyana's Commentary. The work was hailed in India with gratitude and joy; it opened to Hindu students generally the great and ancient volume, which had hitherto remained sealed with seven seals to all but a very few scholars; and it awakened in them a historical interest in the past,—a desire to enquire into their ancient history and ancient faith from original sources.

Jones and Colebrooke and Wilson had worthy successors in India, but none more distinguished than James Prinsep. The inscriptions of Asoka on pillars and rocks all over India had remained unintelligible for over a thousand years, and had defied the skill of Sir William Jones and his successors. James Prinsep, then Secretary to the Asiatic Society, deciphered these inscriptions, and a flood of light was thus thrown on Buddhist antiquities and post-Buddhist history. Prinsep was also the first to deal in a scholar-like way with the coins of the post-Buddhist kings found all over Western India. He has been followed by able scholars. Dr. Haug edited and translated the Aitareya Brâhmana, and elucidated the history of the Parsis; Dr. Burnell wrote on South Indian Paleography; Dr. Bühler has ably dealt with the ancient legal literature; and

Dr. Thibaut has, in late years, discovered Ancient Hindu Geometry.

Among my countrymen, the great reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Sarasvatî, turned their attention to ancient Sanscrit literature. The first translated a number of Upanishads into English, and the latter published a translation of the Rig Veda Sanhitâ in Hindi. Sir Raja Radha Kanta Dev cultivated Sanscrit learning, and published a comprehensive and excellent dictionary entitled the Sabdakalpadruma. Dr. Bhao Daji and Professor Bhandarkar, Dr. K. M. Banerjea and Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra have, by their varied and valuable contributions, taken their fair share of work in the field of antiquities. My esteemed friend, Pandit Satya Vrata Sâma Sramin has published an excellent edition of the Sâma Veda with Sâyana's Commentary and an edition of the White Yajur Veda with Mahîdhara's Commentary, and is now engaged in a learned edition of Yâska's Nirukta. And lastly, my learned friend, Mr. Anand Ram Borooah,* of the Bengal Civil Service, has published a handy and excellent English-Sanscrit Dictionary, and is now engaged in a Sanscrit grammar of formidable size and erudition!

* Since the above lines were written, the author has received the sad intelligence of the death of the talented scholar. His untimely death is a loss to Sanscrit scholarship in this country, which will not be easily remedied. To the present writer, the sorrow is of a personal nature, as he enjoyed the friendship of the deceased for twenty years and more,—since the old College-days in this country and in England.

General Cunningham's labours in archæology and in the elucidation of ancient Indian Geography are invaluable; and Burgess and Fergusson have treated on Indian Architecture. Fergusson's work on the subject is accepted as the standard work.

In Europe, Dr. Fausböll may be said to be the founder of Pâli scholarship, and edited the Dhammapada so far back as 1855, and has since edited the Jâtaka Tales. Dr. Oldenberg has edited the Vinaya texts; and these scholars, as well as Rhys Davids and Max Müller have now given us an English translation of the most important portions of the Buddhist Scriptures in the invaluable series of Sacred Books of the East.

I wish to say a word about this series, because I am, in a special degree, indebted to it. Professor Max Müller, who has, by his life-long labours, done more than any living scholar to elucidate ancient Hindu literature and history, has how conceived the noble idea of enabling English readers to go to the fountain-source, and consult oriental works in a series of faithful translations. More than thirty volumes, translated from the Sanscrit, Chinese, Zend, Pahlavi, Pali, Arabic, &c., have already been published, and more volumes are expected. I take this opportunity to own my great indebtedness to the volumes of this series which relate to Indian History. I have freely quoted from them,—allowing myself the liberty of a verbal alteration here and there; and I have seldom thought it necessary to consult those original

Sanscrit works which have been translated in this faithful and valuable series.

And this brings me to the subject of the present work, about which I wish to say a few words. I have often asked myself: Is it possible, with the help that is now available, to write, in a handy work, a clear, historica account of the civilization of Ancient India, based on ancient Sanscrit literature, and written in a sufficiently popular manner to be acceptable to the general reader? I never doubted the possibility of such a work; but I have often wished—even when engaged in this task—that it had been undertaken by an abler scholar, and by one who could devote his attention and time more exclusively to it than I could possibly do.

Scholars who have devoted their lifetime to the study of Indian Antiquities, and who have brought out rich ores from that inexhaustible mine, seem however to have little time or little inclination to coin the metal for the every-day use of the general public. That unambitious task must, therefore, devolve on humbler labourers.

That there is need for such a popular work will not be denied. The Hindu student's knowledge of Indian History practically begins with the date of the Mahommedan Conquest,—the Hindu period is almost a blank to him. The school-boy who knows all about the twelve invasions of Mahmud, knows little of the first invasions and wars of the Aryans, who conquered

and settled in the Punjab three thousand years before the Sultan of Ghuzni. He has read of Shahab-ud-din Muhammad Ghori's conquest of Delhi and Kanouj, but has scarcely any historical knowledge of the ancient kingdoms of the Kurus and the Panchâlas in the same tract of country. He knows what emperor reigned in Delhi when Sivaji lived and fought, but scarcely knows of the king who ruled in Magadha when Gautama Buddha lived and preached. He is familiar with the history of Ahmadnagar, Bijapore, and Golkonda, but has scarcely heard of the Andhras, the Guptas and the Chalukyas. He knows exactly the date of Nadir Shah's invasion of India, but scarcely knows, within five centuries, the date when the Sakas invaded India, and were repelled by Vikramâditya the Great. He knows more of the dates of Ferdusi and Ferishta than of Âryabhatta or Bhavabhûti, and can tell who built the Taj Mahal without having the faintest notion when the topes of Sanchi, the caves of Karli and Ajanta, the temples of Ellora, Bhuvanesvara, and Jagannâtha were built.

And yet, such things should not be. For the Hindu student the history of the Hindu period should not be a blank, nor a confused jumble of historic and legendary names, religious parables, and Epical and Pauranic myths. No study has so potent an influence in forming a nation's mind and a nation's character as a critical and careful study of its past history. And it is by such

study alone that an unreasoning and superstitious worship of the past is replaced by a legitimate and manly admiration.

It almost seems an irony of fate that the past should be considered a blank in a country where ancient sages have handed down traditions and elaborate compositions through thousands of years, and where generation after generation have preserved the heritage by a feat of memory which is considered a miracle in modern days! In vain must the thousands of ancient Hindu students and scholars have toiled to preserve these works, if the works give us no clue to a general outline History of Ancient India. And in vain, too, must eminent European scholars and antiquarians have worked during the last hundred years, if it be still impossible to put together the results of their learned researches in the shape of a connected history which will be intelligible to the general reader and the ordinary student.

Happily this is no longer impossible. And although many portions of Indian History are still obscure, although many questions of detail are still subjects of controversy, to construct a general history of the Hindu Period is no longer a hopeless task. And, however unfit I feel myself to accomplish this task, I, nevertheless, venture to make a commencement, in the hope that abler scholars will pardon my shortcomings rectify my inevitable errors, and perform skilfully and, well what I may do clumsily or leave undone.

In undertaking this great work, I must, once for all, disclaim any intention to make any new discoveries, or to extend in any way the limits of oriental scholarship and research. My limited knowledge of the subject precludes the possibility of such a pretention being advanced, and the limits of the present work make it impossible that any such results should be achieved. I have simply tried to string together, in a methodical order, the results of the labours of abler scholars, in order to produce a readable work for the general reader. If, in the fulfilment of this design, I have been sometimes betrayed into conjectures and suppositions, I can only ask my readers to accept them as such,—not as historical discoveries.

Ten years ago I collected and arranged the materials then available to me, with a view to write a little school-book in my own vernacular; and the little work has since been accepted as a text-book in many schools in Bengal. Since that time I have continued my work in this line, as far as my time permitted; and when, three years ago, I was enabled by the generosity of the Government of Bengal to place a complete Bengali translation of the Rig Veda Sanhitâ before my countrymen, I felt more than ever impelled to re-arrange the historical materials furnished by our ancient literature in a permanent form. In pursuance of this object, I published some papers, from time to time, in the *Calcutta Review;* and these papers, together with all other

materials which I have collected, have been embodied and arranged in the present work.

The method on which this work has been written is very simple. My principal object has been to furnish the general reader with a practical and handy work on the Ancient History of India,—not to compose an elaborate work of discussions on Indian Antiquities. To study clearness and conciseness on a subject like this was not however an easy task. Every chapter in the present work deals with matters about which long researches have been made, and various opinions have been recorded. It would have afforded some satisfaction to me to have given the reader the history of every controversy, the account of every antiquarian discovery, and the *pros* and *cons* of every opinion advanced. But I could not yield to this temptation without increasing the work to three or four times its present humble size, and thus sacrificing the very object with which it is written. To carry out my primary object, I have avoided every needless controversy and discussion, and I have tried to explain as clearly, concisely, and distinctly as I was able, each succeeding phase of Hindu civilization and Hindu life in ancient times.

But, while conciseness has been the main object of the present work, I have also endeavoured to tell my story so that it may leave some distinct memories on my readers after they have closed the work. For this reason, I have avoided details as far as possible, and tried

to develope, fully and clearly, the leading facts and features of each succeeding age. Repetition has not been avoided, where such repetition seemed necessary to impress on my readers the cardinal facts—the salient features of the story of Hindu civilization.

The very copious extracts which I have given (in translation) from the Sanscrit works may, at first sight, seem to be inconsistent with my desire for conciseness. Such extracts, however, have been advisedly given. In the first place, on a subject where there is so much room for difference in opinion, it is of the highest importance to furnish the reader with the text on which my conclusions are based, to enable him to form his own judgment, and to rectify my mistakes if my conclusions are erroneous. In the second place, it is a gain in the cause of historical knowledge to familiarize the reader with the texts of our ancient authors. It is scarcely to be hoped that the busy student will spend much of his time in reading the ancient and abstruse works in the original or even in learned translations, and the historian who seeks to familiarize his readers with some portions at least of these ancient works, adds in so far to the accurate knowledge of his readers on this subject. And lastly, it has been well said, that thought is language, and language is thought. And if it be the intention of the historian to convey an idea of ancient thought,—of what the ancient Hindus felt and believed,—he cannot do this better than by quoting the

words by which that ancient people expressed themselves. Such brief extracts very often give the modern reader a far more realistic and intimate knowledge of ancient Hindu society and manners and ways of thinking than any account that I could give at twice the length. And it is because I have desired the modern reader to enter into the spirit and the inner life of the ancient Hindus, that I have tried to bring the old composers of hymns and sûtras face to face with the reader, and allowed them to speak for themselves. Such an intimate grasp of the inner life and feelings of the ancients is the very kernel of true historical knowledge, and I have felt it a hopeless task to impart this knowledge more accurately or more concisely than in the words of the ancients. It is for this reason mainly, and consistently with my anxiety to be concise, that I have quoted copiously from ancient works.

In conclusion, I have to crave the indulgence of the reader for the many dificiencies which he will, no doubt, find in the present work, written in moments stolen from official work, and in places where a decent library was never available. Such claim to indulgence is seldom admitted, and the reader very pertinently enquires why a writer should ever undertake a work for which he was not in every way fully equipped. Nevertheless, I mention these circumstances, as they may explain, if they cannot justify, the shortcomings of the work.

The time of the present writer is not his own, and the charge of a Bengal District with an area of over six thousand square miles and a population of over three millions, leaves little leisure for other work. To arrange my materials, under these circumstances, has been an arduous work, and I can only ask the indulgent consideration of my readers for any errors and defects which may have crept into this work.

MYMENSING DISTRICT,
BENGAL,
13*th August* 1888.

R. C. DUTT.

INTRODUCTION.

EPOCHS AND DATES.

THE History of Ancient India is a history of thirty centuries of human culture and progress. It divides itself into several distinct periods, each of which, for length of years, will compare with the entire history of many a modern people.

Other nations claim an equal or even a higher antiquity than the Hindus. The Egyptians have records on their everlasting monuments of a civilization which goes beyond three thousand years before Christ. Assyrian scholars have claimed an equally remote antiquity for the Shumiro-Accadian civilization of Chaldea, which is said to have flourished over a thousand years before Neniveh and Babylon were founded. The Chinese, too, have a history which dates from about 2,400 B. C. For India, modern scholars have not claimed a higher antiquity than 2,000 B. C., though future researches may require an extension of this date.

But there is a difference between the records of the Hindus and the records of other nations. The hieroglyphic records of the ancient Egyptians yield little information beyond the names of kings and

pyramid-builders, and accounts of dynasties and wars. The cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria and Babylon tell us much the same story. And even ancient Chinese records shed little light on the gradual progress of human culture and civilization.

Ancient Hindu works are of a different character. If they are defective in some respects, as they undoubtedly are, they are defective as accounts of dynasties, of wars, of so-called historical incidents. On the other hand they give us a full, connected, and clear account of the advancement of civilization, of the progress of the human mind, such as we shall seek for in vain among the records of any other equally ancient nation. The literature of each period is a perfect picture—a photograph, if we may so call it—of the Hindu civilization of that period. And the works of successive periods, form a complete history of Hindu civilization for over three thousand years, so full, so clear, that he who runs may read.

Inscriptions on stone and writings on papyri are recorded with a design to commemorate passing events. The songs and hymns and philosophical and religious effusions of a people are an unconscious and true reflection of its civilization and its thought. The earliest effusions of the Hindus were not recorded in writing,—they are, therefore, full and unrestricted,—they are a natural and true expression of the nation's thoughts and feelings. They were preserved, not on

stone, but in the faithful memory of the people, who handed down the great heritage from century to century with a scrupulous exactitude which, in modern days, would be considered a miracle.

Scholars who have studied the Vedic hymns historically are aware that the materials they afford for constructing a history of civilization are fuller and truer than any accounts which could have been recorded on stone or papyri. And those who have pursued Hindu literature through the different periods of Hindu history, are equally aware that they form a complete and comprehensive story of the progress and gradual modifications of Hindu civilization, thought, and religion through over three thousand years. And the philosophical historian of human civilization need not be a Hindu to think that the Hindus have preserved the fullest, the clearest, and the truest materials for his work.

We wish not to be misunderstood. We have made the foregoing remarks simply with a view to remove the very common and very erroneous impression that Ancient India has no history worth studying, no connected and reliable chronicle of the past which would be interesting or instructive to the modern reader.

Ancient India has a connected story to tell, and so far from being uninteresting, its special feature is its intense attractiveness. We read in that ancient story how a gifted Aryan people, separated by

circumstances from the outside world, worked out their civilization amidst natural and climatic conditions which were peculiarly favourable. We note their intellectual discoveries age after age; we watch their religious progress and developments through successive centuries; we mark their political career, as they gradually expand over India, and found new kingdoms and dynasties; we observe their struggles against priestly domination, their successes and their failures; we study with interest their great social and religious revolutions and their far-reaching consequences. And this great story of a nation's intellectual life—more thrilling in its interest than any tale which Shaharzadi told—is nowhere broken and nowhere disconnected. The great causes which led to great social and religious changes are manifest to the reader, and he follows the gradual revolution of Hindu civilization through thirty centuries without a break or interruption.

The very shortcomings of Hindu civilization, as compared with the younger civilization of Greece or Rome have their lessons for the modern reader. The story of our successes is not more instructive than the story of our failures. The hymns of Visvâmitra, the philosophy of Kapila and the poetry of Kâlidâsa have no higher lessons for the modern reader than the deep causes which led to the decadence of our political life and the ascendancy of priests. The story of the religious rising of the people under the leadership of

Gautama Buddha is not more instructive than the causes which account for the absence of any political rising among the people, the absence of any efforts after popular freedom. And the great heights to which the genius of Brâhmans and Kshatriyas soared in the infancy of the world's intellectual life are not more suggestive and not more instructive than the absence of genius in the people at large in their ordinary pursuits and trades,—in mechanical inventions and maritime discoveries, in sculpture, architecture and arts, in manifestations of popular life and the assertion of popular power.

The history of the intellectual and religious life of the ancient Hindus is matchless in its continuity, its fulness, and its philosophical truth. But the historian who only paints the current of that intellectual life performs half his duty. There is another and a sadder portion of Hindu history,—and it is necessary that this portion of the story, too, should be faithfully told.

We have said before that the history of Ancient India divides itself into several distinct and long periods or epochs. Each of these periods has a distinct literature, and each has a civilization peculiar to it, which modified itself into the civilization of the next period under the operation of great political and social causes. It is desirable that we should, at the outset, give a brief account of these historical epochs and the great historical events by which they

are marked. Such an outline-account of the different periods will make our readers acquainted with the plan and scope of this work, and will probably help them to grasp more effectually the details of each period when we come to treat them more fully. We begin with the earliest period, viz., that of Aryan settlements in the Punjab. The hymns of the Rig Veda furnish us with the materials for a history of this period.

FIRST EPOCH.

In this priceless volume, we find the Hindu Aryans as conquerors and settlers on the banks of the Indus and its five branches; and India beyond the Sutlej was almost unknown to them. They came as a conquering race, full of the self-assertion and vigour of a young national life, with a strong love of action and a capacity for active enjoyments. They were, in this respect, far removed from the contemplative and passive Hindus of later days; they rejoiced in wealth and cattle and pasture-fields; and they carved out, with their strong right arm, new possessions and realms from the aborigines of the soil, who vainly struggled to maintain their own against the invincible conquerors. Thus, the period was one of wars and conquests against the aborigines; and the Aryan victors triumphantly boast of their conquests in their hymns, and implore their gods to bestow on them wealth and new possessions, and to

destroy the barbarians. Whatever was bright and cheerful and glorious in the aspects of nature struck the Aryans with admiration and gladness, and such manifestations of nature were worshipped and invoked as gods.

It is needless to say that the entire body of Aryans was then a united community, and the only distinction of castes was between the Aryans and the aborigines. Even the distinction between professions was not very marked; and the sturdy lord of many acres, who ploughed his fields and owned large herds in times of peace, went out to defend his village or plunder the aborigines in times of war, and often composed spirited hymns to the martial god Indra in his hours of devotion. There were no temples and no idols; each patriarch of a family lighted the sacrificial fire in his own hearth, and offered milk and rice offerings, or animals, or libations of the Soma juice to the fire, and invoked the "bright" gods for blessings, and health, and wealth for himself and his children. Chiefs of tribes were kings, and had their priests to perform sacrifices and utter the hymns for them; but there was no priestly caste, and no royal caste. The people were free, enjoying the freedom which belongs to vigorous pastoral and agricultural tribes.

What is the date of this period of Aryan settlements in the Punjab? Colebrooke, who was the first discoverer of the Vedas for European readers, fixed the

fourteenth century as the date when they were finally compiled and arranged. And as all scholars allow five or six centuries for the expansion of the Aryans along the Indus and its five tributaries, we may fix the dates of the first period at 2,000 to 1,400 B. C. Professor Max Müller, in his latest works, allows 1,500 B. C. as the date when the Vedas, such as we now have them, were composed,* or 1,500 to 1,000 B. C. as the period when they were composed and finally arranged. In another work he states: "Four thousand years ago (or it may be earlier) the Aryans, who had travelled southwards to the rivers of the Punjab called him Dyaush Pitâ or Heavenly Father."†

Professor Weber allows a thousand years for the "occupying, subjecting to complete cultivation, and Brâhmanising the immense tract of land" from the Indus to the Gunduck. With this argument we agree; but the Professor is wrong when he fixes 500 B. C. as the time when the Hindus settled on the Gunduck. We will shew that they founded the kingdom of the Videhas by that river about 1,000 B. C., and the Aryans must have first crossed the Indus about 2,000 B. C.

Professor Whitney gives 2,000 to 1,500 B. C. for the Rig Veda hymns, and Dr. Martin Haug allows 2,000 to 1,400 B. C. for those hymns, while, for the earliest of

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* *India: what can it teach us?* (1883), p. 83.

† *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, Lecture VII.

them he claims a still remoter date. It is unnecessary to cite the authority of other scholars; we think we agree with the general opinion on the subject when we fix 2,000 to 1,400 B. C. for the first period of Hindu history. And, for the sake of convenience, we will call this period the *Vedic Period.*

Epic Period

SECOND EPOCH.

Vedic & Epic

When once the Hindu Aryans had come as far as the Sutlej, they did not lose much time in crossing that river and pouring down in numbers in the valley of the Ganges. We have rare mention of the Ganges and the Jumna in the Rig Veda, shewing that they were not yet generally known to the Hindus in the first or Vedic Period, although adventurous colonists must have issued out of the Punjab and settled in the shores of those distant rivers. Such settlements must have multiplied in the second period, until, in the course of some centuries, the entire valley of the Ganges, as far down as modern Tirhoot, were the seats of powerful kingdoms and nationalities, who cultivated science and literature in their schools of learning, and developed new forms of religion and of civilization widely different from those of the Vedic Period.

Among the nations who flourished in the Gangetic valley, the most renowned have left their names in the epic literature of India. The Kurus had their kingdom round about modern Delhi. The Panchâlas settled

further to the south-east, round about modern Kanouj. The Kosalas occupied the spacious country between the Jumna and the Gunduck, which includes modern Oudh; the Videhas lived beyond the Gunduck, in what is now known as Tirhoot; and the Kâsis settled down near and about modern Benares. These were the most renowned nations of the second period, though other less powerful nationalities also flourished and extended their kingdoms, from time to time.

When the first Kurus and Panchâlas settled in the Doab, they gave indications of a vigorous national life, and their internecine wars form the subject of the first national Epic of India, the Mahâbhârata. And, although this work, in its present shape, is the production of a later age—or rather of later ages—yet, even in its present form, it preserves indications of that rude and sturdy vigour and warlike jealousies which must have characterised the early conquerers of the Gangetic valley. The Hindus did not, however, live many centuries in the soft climate of this valley before losing their vigour and manliness, as they gained in learning and civilization. As they drifted down the river they manifested less and less of the vigour of conquering races. The royal courts of the Videhas and the Kâsis were learned and enlightened, but contemporary literature does not bear witness to their warlike qualities. The Kosalas, too, were a polished nation, but the traditions of that nation, preserved in the second National

Epic of India the Râmâyana, (in its present form, a production of later ages,) shew more devotion to social and domestic duties, obedience to priests, and regard for religious forms, than the sturdy valour and the fiery jealousies of the Mahâbhârata.

This gradual enervation of the Hindus was the cause of the most important results in religious and social rules. Religion changed its spirit. The manly but simple hymns with which the sturdy conquerors of the Punjab had invoked nature-gods scarcely commended themselves to the more effete and more ceremonious Hindus of the Gangetic valley. The hymns were still repeated, but lost their meaning and sense, and vast ceremonials and observances took the place of simple forms. The priestly class increased in number and in influence, until they formed a hereditary caste of their own. The kings and warriors of the Gangetic valley lived in more splendid courts, and had more gorgeous surroundings than the simple agricultural warriors of the Punjab, and soon separated themselves from the people and formed a caste of their own. The mass of the people—the Vaisyas or Visas of the Rig Veda—became more lifeless than their forefathers in the Punjab, and wore, without a protest, the chains which priests and warriors—the Brâhmans and the Kshatriyas—threw around them. And as subjection means demoralization, the people in Hindu kingdoms never afterwards became what the people in ancient and modern Europe

have striven to be. And lastly, the aborigines who were subjugated and had adopted the Aryan civilization formed the low caste of Sûdras, and were declared unfit to perform the Aryan religious rites or to acquire religious knowledge.

Such was the origin of the Caste-system in India, in the second period of Hindu history. The system arose out of weakness and lifelessness among the people, and, to a certain extent it has perpetuated that weakness ever after.

It will be observed that this Second Period was a period of the submission of the people under the Brâhmans and the Kshatriyas, and of the submission of the Kshatriyas themselves under the Brâhmans. At the close of the period, however, there appears to have been a reaction, and the proud Kshatriyas at last tried to shake off the galling yoke, and to prove their equality with the Brâhmans in learning and religious culture. Wearied with the unmeaning rituals and ceremonials prescribed by priests, the Kshatriyas started new speculations and bold enquiries after the truth. The effort was unavailing. The priests remained supreme. But the vigorous speculations which the Kshatriyas started form the only redeeming portion of the inane and lifeless literature of this period. And these speculations remained as a heritage of the nation, and formed the nucleus of the Hindu philosophical systems and religious revolutions of a later day.

It was in this period of Aryan expansion in the Gangetic valley that the Rig Veda and the three other Vedas,—Sâman, Yajus and Atharvan—were finally arranged and compiled. Then followed another class of compositions known as the Brâhmanas, and devoted to sacrificial rites; and these inane and verbose compositions reflect the enervation of the people and the dogmatic pretensions of the priests of the age. The custom of retirement from the world into forest life, which was unknown in the earlier ages, sprang up, and the last portions of the Brâhmanas are Âranyakas devoted to forest rites. And lastly the bold speculations started by Kshatriyas are known as the Upanishads, and form the last portions of the literature of this period, and close the so-called *Revealed Literature* of India.

Dr. H. H. Wilson, when reviewing Professor Max Müller's great work on Sanscrit literature thirty years ago, declared that a period of five centuries was not too long to account for the great political, social, and religious changes which occurred in this period. And Dr. Wilson was right. Within this period the valley of the Ganges, as far as Tirhoot, was cleared, colonized, and Hindu-ized, and formed the sites of powerful kingdoms. Religious observances were vastly elaborated; social rules were changed; the caste-system was formed; the supremacy of priests was established and confirmed, and, ultimately, questioned by the Kshatriyas; and lastly,

within this age, a varied and voluminous literature was recorded. The Period may, therefore, be supposed to have extended approximately from 1,400 to 1,000 B. C

One or two facts may be cited here which confirm these dates. The central historical fact of this period was a great war between the Kurus and the Panchâlas which forms the subject of the Mahâbhârata, and of which we shall have something to say further on. The central literary fact of this period was the compilation of the Vedas. Tradition and the Epic itself inform us that the compiler of the Vedas was a contemporary of the war; but we may accept or reject this as we like. We will examine these two facts separately.

Tradition, again, has it that when the Vedas were compiled, the position of the solstitial points was observed and recorded to mark the date. The Jyotisha in which this observation is now found is a late work, not earlier than the third century before Christ, but the observation was certainly made at an ancient date, and Bentley and Archdeacon Pratt—both able mathematicians—have gone over the calculation and found that it was made in 1,181 B. C.

Much has been written of late against the value of this discovery in Europe, America, and India, but we have found nothing in these discussions which goes against the genuineness of the astronomical observation. We are inclined to believe that the observation marks approximately the true date of the final

compilation of the Vedas; and as the work of compilation probably occupied numerous teachers for generations together, we may suppose that the Vedas were compiled during the 14th and 13th centuries B. C. And this date falls within the period which we have assigned for the second epoch.

Now, with regard to the Kuru-Panchâla War. The annals of different kingdoms in India allude to this ancient war, and some of these annals are not unreliable. The founder of Buddhism lived in the sixth century B. C., and we learn from the annals of Magadha that 35 kings reigned between the Kuru-Panchâla War and the time of Buddha. Allowing 20 years to each reign, this would place the war in the 13th century B. C.

Again we know from coins, that Kanishka ruled in Kashmîra in the first century A. D., and his successor Abhimanyu probably reigned towards the close of that century. The historian of Kashmîra informs us that 52 kings reigned for 1,266 years from the time of the Kuru Panchâla War to the time of Abhimanyu, and this would place the war in the 12th century B. C.

We do not ask the reader to accept any of the particular dates given above. It is almost impossible to fix any precise date in the History of India before Alexander the Great visited the land; and we may well hestitate, even when astronomical calculations point to a particular year, or historical lists point to a particular century. All that we ask, and all that we are entitled

to ask, is that the reader will now find it possible to accept the fact that the Vedas were finally compiled and the Kuru Panchâla War was fought sometime about the 13th century or the 12th century B. C.

And, if the Kuru Panchâla War was fought in the 13th century B. C. (*i.e.*, about a century before the Trojan War), it is impossible to fix a date later than 1,400 B. C. for the commencement of the second epoch of which we are speaking. For at the time of the Kuru Panchâla War, the country round modern Delhi and Kanouj were the seats of powerful nations who had developed a civilization and literature of their own. And two centuries must be allowed between the date when the Aryans issued out of the Punjab and the date when these results had been achieved in the Gangetic valley.

To accept 1,400 B. C. as the date when the Aryans issued out of the Punjab, is to confirm the dates we have given (2,000 to 1,400 B. C.) for the first epoch, the Vedic Period.

Again, many of the Brâhmanas contain internal evidence that they were composed at the time or after the time of the Kurus and the Panchâlas. We may, therefore, suppose these to have been composed in the 13th and 12th centuries B. C. And the Upanishads, which mark the close of Brâhmana literature, were composed about the 11th century B. C. Janaka, the King of the Videhas, gave a start to the Upanishads; we may,

therefore, suppose the Videhas and the Koshalas to have flourished about 1,200 to 1,000 B. C., as the Kurus and the Panchâlas flourished about 1,400 to 1,200 B. C.

For the sake of convenience we will call this second period the *Epic Period*. It was the period when the nations described in the national epics of India lived and fought; when the Kurus and the Panchâlas, the Kosalas, and the Videhas held sway along the valley of the Ganges.

THIRD EPOCH.

THE Third Epoch is, perhaps, the most brilliant period of Hindu history. It was in this period that the Aryans issued out of the Gangetic Valley, spread themselves far and wide, subjugated and occupied the whole of India, and introduced Hindu civilization and founded Hindu kingdoms as far as the southernmost limits of India. Magadha which was already known to the Hindus in the Epic Period was completely Hindu-ized in the Third Epoch; and the young and powerful kingdom founded here soon eclipsed and then subjugated all the ancient kingdoms of the Gangetic Valley. The descendants of the proud races who had fought the epic wars in the Ganges Valley, the descendants of the older and sturdier races who had first founded Aryan dominions in the Indus Valley,—all quailed before this new and rising power. Chandragupta, the contemporary of Alexander the Great, brought the whole of Northern

India, from the Punjab to Behar, under the rule of Magadha ; and his grandson Asoka the Great, the promulgator of Buddhism, was the greatest emperor that ever ruled in India within the thirty centuries of Hindu independence. With the time of Asoka the Third Epoch ends, and the Fourth or Buddhist Epoch begins.

Aryan colonists penetrated to Bengal and introduced Hindu religion and civilization among the aborigines, but Bengal never made any mark in the history of Ancient India. The kingdoms founded in the south won greater distinction. The Andhras founded a powerful kingdom in the Deccan, founded great schools of learning, and were destined, at a later period, to extend their sway over Northern India also. Further south, the Aryans came in contact with the old and imperfect Dravidian civilization. The more perfect Hindu civilization prevailed, and the Dravidians were Hindu-ized and founded kingdoms which became distinguished for learning and power. The three sister-kingdoms of the Cholas, the Cheras, and the Pandyas made their mark before the third century B. C., and Kânchî (Conjeveram), the capital of the Cholas, distinguished itself as the seat of Hindu learning at a later day.

In the west the Saurâshtras (including Guzrat and the Maharatta country) received Hindu civilization from the Andhras of the Deccan ; while, beyond a strip of the sea, Ceylon was discovered, and formed a great resort of Hindu traders, until Asoka the Great sent his

son to that land and converted the people to Buddhism. In the east, Buddhist pilgrims came and settled in Orissa and excavated caves in rocks centuries before Asoka.

The practical and enterprising spirit of the age shews itself in literature as well as in territorial conquests. The whole of the verbose teachings and rites of the Brâhmanas and Âranyakas were condensed into Sûtras or aphorisms so as to form handy manuals for the sacrifice. Other Sûtras were framed for laying down the rules of domestic rites and social conduct. Sûtra schools sprang all over India, in the north and in the south, and works multiplied. Besides these religious works, phonetics, metre, grammar, and lexicons, were studied, and Yâska wrote his Nirukta, and Pânini his grammar, early in this period. And the construction of sacrificial altars according to fixed rules gave rise to geometry which was first discovered in India.

And, lastly, the lessons of the Upanishads were not lost. The bold speculations started in these works were pursued, until Kapila arose in the eighth or seventh century B. C. and started the Sânkhya philosophy,—the first closely-reasoned system of mental philosophy known in the world. Other systems of philosophy were started by other thinkers, but the Sânkhya philosophy was destined to have the greatest influence in the future of India; for Gautama Buddha was born in the sixth century B. C., and he added to the cold logic of the Sânkhya philosophy a world-embracing

sympathy and love for mankind which has made his religion the religion of a third of the human race.

Buddhism spread slowly among the poor and the lowly, for it was a protest against caste-privileges, a religion of equality of men. It spread slowly—as Christianty spread in Europe in the early days—until Asoka embraced Buddhism in the third century B. C., as Constantine the Great embraced the new faith in Europe. As in the case of Christianity, so in the case of Buddhism, it fast became a national religion under imperial favour, and from the third century B. C., the Fourth or Buddhist Epoch begins.

Our readers will perceive that we have no difficulty in fixing the dates of the Third Epoch. Asoka the Great ascended the throne about 260 B. C., and held his great Buddhist Council to settle the Buddhist Scriptures about 242 B. C. Two such Councils had been held before, one in the year of Gautama's death in 477 B. C., and one a hundred years after in 377 B. C. But the Council held by Asoka, in 242 B. C. finally settled the Scriptures, and the great emperor then promulgated them all over India, and beyond the limits of India. At this date, therefore, 242 B. C., the Third Epoch ends and the Fourth or Buddhist Epoch begins. And we have seen before that the Second Epoch closes about 1,000 B. C. We may, therefore, date the Third Epoch from 1,000 B. C. to 242 B. C. For the sake of convenience, we will call it the *Philosophical Period.*

The great political, literary, and religious incidents of the period require the wide space of seven centuries and a half that we have allotted to the Epoch ; and all the facts that we know confirm these dates. Dr. H. H. Wilson considers that the first incursions of the Aryans to the south began about 1,000 B. C., and we have adopted this date as the commencement of the Third Period. The dates which Dr. Bühler has given to the Sûtras of Gautama, Baudhâyana, and Âpastamba fall within the dates given above. Dr. Thibaut assigns the eighth century B. C. to the Sulva Sûtras or geometry. Writers on Sânkhya philosopy assign the eighth or seventh century B. C. to Kapila's philosophy, and Gautama Buddha lived, as we know, in the sixth century B. C. Chandragupta was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, and ascended the throne probably in 320 B. C., and his grandson, as we have seen before, became king sixty years later.

These dates, which have been ascertained with tolerable certainty, confirm the dates which we have accepted for the previous or the Epic Period. For, if the philosophy of Kapila, which was a distant and matured result of the Upanishads was started in the eighth or seventh century, the Upanishads themselves must have been composed at least two centuries earlier. And we are presumably correct in assigning B. C. 1,000 for the Upanishads,—the works which closed the Epic Period.

FOURTH EPOCH.

THE epoch begins with the brilliant reign of Asoka the Great, who was the emperor of Northern India and published his edicts of humanity on stone pillars, and on rocks all over Northern India, from Guzrat to Orissa. He prohibited the slaughter of animals, provided medical aid to men and cattle all over his empire, proclaimed the duties of citizens and members of families, and directed Buddhist missionaries to proceed to the ends of the earth, to mix with the rich and the poor, and to proclaim the truth. His inscriptions shew that he made treaties with Antioch of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epiros, and sent missionaries to these kingdoms to preach the Buddhist religion. "Both here and in foreign countries," says Asoka, "everywhere the people follow the doctrine of the religion of the Beloved of the Gods, wheresoever it reacheth." "Buddhist missionaries," says a Christian writer,* "preached in Syria two centuries before the teaching of Christ (which has so many moral points in common) was heard in Northern Palestine. So true is it that every great historical change has had its forerunner."

The Maurya dynasty which had commenced with Asoka's grandfather Chandragupta about 320 B.C. did not last very long after the time of Asoka. It was

* Mahaffy, Alexander's Empire, Chapter XIII.

followed by two short-lived dynasties, the Sunga and the Kânva (183 to 26 B.C.), and then the great Andhras who had founded a powerful empire in the South conquered Magadha and were masters of Northern India for four centuries and a half, B.C. 26 to A.D. 430. They were generally Buddhists, but respected Brâhmans and orthodox Hindus; and throughout the Buddhist epoch, the two religions flourished in India side by side, and persecution was almost unknown. The Andhras were succeeded by the great Gupta emperors who were supreme in India till about 500 A.D.,* and then their power was overthrown. The Guptas were generally orthodox Hindus, but favoured Buddhism also, and made grants to Buddhist churches and monasteries.

In the meantime India was the scene of continual foreign invasions. The Greeks of Bactria, expelled by Turanian invaders, entered India in the second and first centuries before Christ, founded kingdoms, introduced Greek civilization and knowledge, and had varied fortunes in different parts of India for centuries after. They are said to have penetrated as far as Orissa. The Turanians themselves of the Yu-Chi tribe next invaded India, and gave a powerful dynasty to Kashmîra; and Kanishka the Great Yu-Chi, king of Kashmîra, had an extensive empire in the first century A.D., which

* These dates are however uncertain. Many scholars think the Guptas reigned from the 2nd to the 4th century A. D.

stretched from Kabul, and Kashgar, and Yarkand to Guzrat and Agra. He was a Buddhist, and held a great council of the Northern Buddhists in Kashmîra. The Cambojians and other tribes of Kabul then poured into India, and were in their turn followed by the locust-hordes of the Huns, who spread over Western India in the fifth century A.D. India had no rest from foreign invasions for six or seven centuries after the time of Asoka the Great; but the invaders, as they finally settled down in India, adopted the Buddhist religion, and formed a part of the people.

Buddhism gradually declined during the centuries after the Christian era, much in the same way as the Hinduism of the Rig Veda had gradually become corrupted in the Epic Period when the Hindus had settled down in the Gangetic Valley. Buddhist monks formed a vast and unmanageable body of idle priesthood, owning vast acres of land attached to each monastery, and feeding on the resources of the people; and Buddhist ceremonials and forms bordered more and more on Buddha-worship and idolatry. A change was at hand; and that change was witnessed when Hindu genius and learning and a new form of Hinduism asserted themselves in the sixth century after Christ, first in Ujjayinî, and then all over India. An effete form of Buddhism lingered on for some centuries in some parts of India after this; but the Buddhist period may be said to close with the fifth century A.D.

We find an uninterrupted series of Buddhist rock-cut caves, stûpas, chaityas or churches, and vihâras or monasteries all over India, dating from the time of Asoka to the 5th century A.D., but there are scarcely any specimens of Buddhist architecture of a later date. Temple-building and Hindu architecture flourished from the sixth century A.D., to long after the Mahommedan conquest.

The most valuable portions of Buddhist literature left to us are the scriptures as finally settled in the Council of Asoka, and sent by him all over India and beyond India. These scriptures, preserved in the Pâli language in Ceylon, form our best materials for the history of early Buddhism, while later forms of this literature have been found in Nepal, in Thibet, in China, in Japan, and in all Buddhist countries.

We have said that Hinduism flourished in India side by side with Buddhism throughout the Buddhist Epoch. But Buddhism had a marked effect on Hinduism which cannot be mistaken. Buddhism had questioned the sacredness of the Vedas; and the Hinduism of the Buddhist and subsequent times,—though nominally revering the Vedas,—shews a complete estrangement and emancipation from those ancient works. Hindu astronomy, mathematics, laws, and philosophical speculations had begun from the Vedas and the Vedic sacrifices, and belonged to different Vedic schools. But Hindu science and learning of the post-Buddhist age have no reliance

on the Vedas and do not belong to any Vedic school. Even the revived form of Hinduism of the sixth century and later ages is not a religion of Vedic sacrifices, but of worship of images and gods, unknown to the Vedas.

The Code of Manu represents Hindu thought and manners of the Buddhist Epoch. It is based on the ancient Dharmasûtras or social laws of the Philosophical Period ; but while the Dharmasûtras belong to different Vedic schools, Manu's Sanhitâ knows of no such divisions and professes to be the law for all Aryans. It is remarkable that even so late as Manu's time, the whole Aryan population (leaving aside priests and soldiers), still formed one compact caste, the Vaisyas, and had not been disunited and divided into the numerous trade and profession castes of modern times. Manu's mixed castes are mostly Hindu-ized aboriginal tribes.

For reasons which will appear from the foregoing remarks we date the fourth or *Buddhist Period* from 242 B.C. to 500 A.D.

FIFTH EPOCH.

THE fifth or last epoch of Hindu history is the epoch of Hindu revival, and covers seven centuries from 500 A.D. to 1194 A.D., the date of the Mahommedan conquest of Northern India.

The period begins with great deeds in politics and literature. Foreign invaders had harassed India for centuries before, and at last a great avenger arose.

Vikramâditya the Great, of Ujjayinî, was the master of Northern India; he beat back the invaders known as the Sakas in the great battle of Korur, and asserted Hindu independence. Hindu genius and literature revived under his auspices, and a new form of Hinduism asserted itself.

The two centuries and a half commencing with the time of Vikramâditya the Great (500 to 750 A.D.) may be called the Augustan era of later Sanscrit literature, and nearly all the great works which are popular in India to this day belong to this period. Kâlidâsa wrote his matchless dramas and poems in Vikrama's court. Amara Sinha, the lexicographer, was another of the "nine gems" of this court. And Bhâravi was Kâlidâsa's contemporary or lived shortly after. Silâditya II., a successor of Vikramâditya, ruled from 610 to 650 A.D., and is reputed to have been the author of Ratnâvali, though the work was probably composed by an author of his court. Dandin, the author of Dasakumâra Charita, was an old man when Silâditya II reigned, and Bânabhatta, the author of Kâdambarî, lived in his court. Subandhu, the author of Vâsavadattâ, also lived at the same time; and there are reasons to believe that the Bhattikâvya was composed by Bhartrihari, the author of the Satakas, in the same reign.

In the next century Yasovarman ruled between 700 and 740 A.D., and the renowned Bhavabhûti composed his powerful dramas in this reign. Bhavabhûti, however

was the last of the galaxy of poets and literary men,—and no literary genius arose in India after the middle of the 8th century.

It was in this Augustan era also that the great national epics of India, the production of many ages, received their last additions and touches and assumed their final shape, and the voluminous Purânas, which have given their name to this Period, began to be composed in their present shape.

In modern Hindu science, too, we have the brightest names in these two centuries and a half. Âryabhatta, the founder of modern Hindu astronomy, was born in 476 A.D., and produced his work early in the sixth century. Varâha Mihira, his successor, was one of the "nine gems" of Vikrama's Court. Brahmagupta was born in 598 A.D., and was, therefore, a contemporary of Bânabhatta, the novelist. And the unknown author of the Sûrya Siddhânta also lived about the sixth century.

This brilliant period of two centuries and a half (500 to 750 A.D.) was followed by two centuries of impenetrable darkness! The history of India from 750 to 950 A.D. is a perfect blank. No great dynasties rose to power, no literary or scientific men rose to renown, no great work of architecture or art was constructed in Northern India. History is silent over these two dread centuries!

But we have indications of what was transpiring. The two dark centuries witnessed the fall of ancient

dynasties, and the crumbling down of ancient kingdoms and nationalities. They resemble the dark period of Europe, which witnessed the fall of the Roman power, and which cleared up when Feudal power arose. In India, too, the power of ancient races and dynasties was silently swept away during the period of darkness; and when light breaks in again, we see a new race of Hindu Feudal barons as the masters of India,—the modern Rajputs! In the general dissolution of ancient power and the struggle for supremacy, the youngest and the most vigorous race came to the forefront, and about 950 A.D. we find the Rajput dynasties ruling everywhere in Northern India. They inherited the throne of Vikramâditya and his successors in Ujjayinî and Kanouj; they usurped the power of the powerful Ballabhi or Sena Kings of Guzrat and Western India; and they tried to oppose the progress of Sabaktagin and Mahmud in the Punjab.

If the two dark centuries thus witnessed the rise of a new power, they also witnessed another great revolution. Decaying Buddhism, which in the time of Vikramâditya and his successors was allowed to exist side by side with Hinduism, was crushed out of existence during the dark centuries. Vikramâditya, though he favoured Hinduism, never persecuted Buddhists, and some of his most renowned courtiers, like Amara Sinha, the lexicographer, were Buddhists. His successors favoured Hinduism and Buddhism by turns, but there was

complete toleration throughout the period. Silâditya II. the reputed author of Ratnâvali was a staunch Buddhist, and was visited by Houen Tsang, the Chinese traveller, about 640 A.D. There was no thought of persecution throughout this intellectual period, Hinduism was reviving with the vigour of new life, Buddhism was dying a slow and natural death. But there are reasons to suppose that persecution, the burning of monasteries and books, and the banishment of monks, were witnessed between 750 A.D. and 950 A.D. Sankarâchârya the most determined foe of Buddhism, was born in 788 A.D., and the spirit which marks his literary labours soon found vent in the action of kings.

There are reasons to suppose that the new Rajput race is responsible for this persecution which finally stamped out Buddhism in India. Different theories have been put forward as to the origin of the Rajputs. Dr. H. H. Wilson, Col. Tod, and other authorities maintain that they were descended from the Scythian invaders of India who poured in through successive centuries, who were once beaten back by Vikramâditya the Great, but who, like other invaders, settled down in the deserts of Western India, and ruled and conquered when they could. Be that as it may, the Rajputs certainly appear to have been new converts to Hindu civilization, for there is no mention of them in older records. Like all new converts, they espoused Hinduism with exceptional zeal; they were proud to be styled Kshatriyas

(descended from the Solar and Lunar races); and wherever they conquered, Buddhist churches and monasteries went down and Hindu temples and idols arose. Priestly monopoly in its closest form and the unhealthiest restrictions of modern Hinduism date from the rise of the Rajputs, and were perpetuated during the seven centuries of national lifelessness under the Musalman rule.

It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance between European History and Indian History at the period which marks the close of the Ancient Age. The efforts of Vikramâditya to beat back the Sakas have a close resemblance to the efforts of the last Roman Emperors and armies to keep back the hordes of barbarians who pressed eagerly forward for conquests. For centuries the Hindus and the Romans succeeded; but the waves of invasion and conquest at last overwhelmed the ancient empires in India and in Italy, and marked the fall of ancient thrones and institutions! For centuries after this event, Western Europe and Northern India have scarcely any history; or the history is one of violence and wars which closed an Ancient Era and ushered in the Modern Age! When, at last, the darkness clears up, we find a new Feudal power in Europe, and a new Rajput power in India. And the new dynasties of Europe had embraced Christianity, and exerted as zealously and enthusiastically for the mediæval priests, as the newly-converted

Rajputs did for the Brâhmans and the modern Hinduism of India.

But the parallel does not end here. The new masters of India had to fight as hard against the waves of Mahommedan invasion, as the new masters of Europe did in France, Spain, and in Syria. Richard the Lion-hearted was fighting at the same period as Prithu Rai of Delhi, and against the same rising power. In Europe the Christian barons saved their independence, and ultimately expelled the Musalmans even from Spain; in India the Hindu barons struggled and fell. Shahabuddin Ghori overthrew the Rajput kingdoms of Delhi and Ajmere, Kanouj and Benares in 1193 and 1194 A.D., and the boldest of the Rajputs retreated to their desert fastnesses, where they enjoy a sort of independence to the present day, through the generous sufferance of the British Government.

We have dated the Fifth or *Pauranik Period* from 500 A.D. to 1194 A.D., and we have supposed Vikramâditiya the Great to have ruled shortly after 500 A.D. The Samvat Era, beginning in 56 B.C. is connected with Vikramâditya's name, and for a long time it was believed that the great king and the poet Kâlidâsa flourished in the first century B.C. The researches of modern scholars which have confirmed and added to Vikramâditya's historic claims to renown, have, however, taken away from his antiquity, and his real date is no longer an open question. It is impossible for us to

go fully into the evidence which places the great king and the great poet in the 6th century A.D.; but we will mention one or two facts for the curious reader.

Varâha Mihira was admittedly one of the "nine gems" of Vikrama's court, and it has been ascertained from his astronomy that he lived in the 6th century after Christ. Amara Sinha was admittedly another of the "nine gems," and it is believed he was the builder of the temple at Buddha Gayâ, which was constructed after the 5th century A.D. Houen Tsang the Chinese traveller states that Vikramâditya was succeeded by Sîlâditya I., and Sîlâditya I. reigned 60 years before Houen Tsang's time. This gives us the 6th century for Vikrama's reign. And lastly, Kalhana the historian of Kashmîra informs us that Durlabhavardhana began his reign in Kashmîra in 598 A.D., and that six kings ruled between Mâtrigupta (Vikrama's contemporary) and Durlabhavardhana. Allowing 15 years for each reign, we come to the beginning of the 6th century as the date of Mâtrigupta and Vikrama.

But to those who are familiar with later Sanscrit literature, Kâlidâsa's writings are the best evidence of his date. We know the dates of other writers and poets, of Bhavabhûti, Bânabhatta, Bhartrihari, &c., and it is as impossible to separate Kâlidâsa from this galaxy of literary men, and throw him six centuries backwards, *i. e.*, to within two centuries of Asoka and his Buddhist council, as it is impossible to separate

Shakespeare from the Elizabethan poets, and to assign to him a date within two centuries of Alfred's time!

DATES.

What then is the origin of the *Samvạt* Era, beginning at 56 B. C.? And what is the origin of the *Sakâbda* Era, commencing at 78 A. D.? Scholars have experienced the greatest difficulty in finding out what great events these Eras really commemorate; and the conclusions arrived at are not yet beyond the pale of controversy.

The Sakâbda (78 A.D.) is supposed to commemorate the date on which a great Hindu king, Sâlivâhana, or Vikramâditya, defeated the Sakas. But there is no evidence of Saka invasions of that date, except that of the great king Kanishka of Kashmîra, the greatest Buddhist king of India after Asoka the Great, who, as we have seen before, conquered Western India as far as Agra and Guzrat, and held a great Council of the Northern Buddhists. History does not speak of any Hindu king who checked his progress; but on the other hand, there are inscriptions to shew that Kanishka himself established an Era which was used from his time for two or three centuries. It has been conjectured that this Era of Kanishka has subsequently been known as the Sakâbda or the Era of the Saka king; for the Sakâbda was originally a Buddhist Era. It was adopted in Buddhist India, and it was known and used in all Buddhist countries—in Thibet and Burma,

in Ceylon and Java. It was after the Hindu revival of the 6th century that the date was adopted by Hindus, and the story was added, that the Era marked, not the reign of a Buddhist Saka king, but the defeat of the Sakas by a Hindu king. Dr. Bhao Daji was the first to point out that this idea of the Saka Era, commemorating the defeat and destruction of the Sakas, does not crop up before the 8th century A. D.

Wherever the Era is cited by ancient writers, it is cited as the Era of a Saka king;* and to the present day the Era is known in our almanacs as the Sakâbda, or more fully as *Saka Narapater Atîtâbda*, which means the Era of the Saka king, not the Era of the destruction of the Sakas by a Hindu king.

The Samvat Era is still more perplexing. Popularly it is known as the Era of a great victory of Vikramâditya, but history knows of no Vikramâditya of Ujjayinî in 56 B. C.

It is still more curious that the Samvat Era has come into use in comparatively recent times. Dr. Bhao Daji

* The exceedingly careful and observant scholar, Colebrooke, pointed out seventy years ago, that the astronomer, Varâhamihira, who lived in the 6th century A. D., cited the Saka Era as the *Saka Bhupa Kâla* or *Sakendra Kâla*, *i. e.*, the Era of the Saka king. His commentator explains this as the Era when the barbarians called Sakas "*were discomfited by Vikramâditya.*" Again, the astronomer, Brahmagupta, who flourished in the 7th century A. D., cites the Era as *Saka Nripânte*, *i. e.*, after the Saka King. His commentator explains this as "*after the reign of Vikramâditya, who slew a people of barbarians called Sakas.*" —Colebrooke's Algebra, &c., from the Sanscrit, p. xliii. London 1817.

says he knows of no inscription before the 11th century A.D. adopting this Era. Dr. Kern in his introduction to the Brihat Sanhitâ of Varâhamihira, declares that the use of the Samvat Era in early times cannot be demonstrated, while Hindu astronomers begin to use it after the year 1000 or so. Westerguard holds that the grant of Dantidurga, dated *Saka* 675, Samvat 811 (A.C. 754) is the earliest certain instance of its occurrence. And Dr. Burnell holds a similar opinion. No trace of this Era is found in the inscriptions of the Buddhist Period in India, or, in other Buddhist countries, Thibet and Burma, Ceylon and Java.

There certainly seems to be some mystery about the Samvat Era, 56 B.C. It pretends to commemorate a victory of a king of whom history knows nothing ; and it is an Era which does not seem to have been used in the numerous inscriptions in India for several centuries after it pretends to have been established.

Dr. Fergusson offers a bold solution of this mystery. That the real Vikramâditya—the patron of Kâlidâsa—lived in the 6th century A. D. is now established beyond a doubt ; that he defeated foreign invaders in the battle of Korur in the 6th century A. D. is a historic fact ; that this year of a great Hindu victory (probably 544 A.D.), and of the revival of Hindu learning, science, and religion, was a suitable date for the commencement of an Era is apparent. But chroniclers were not satisfied with an Era which

was so long posterior to the Buddhist Era of the Sakâbda, and so they fixed an Era six centuries before the battle of Korur,—to make it anterior to the Sakâbda Era,—and called it by the name of Vikramâditya, the hero of the battle. And they fixed another Era a thousand years before the battle of Korur, and called that Era by the name of Sri Harsha, Vikramâditya's father. No Vikramâditya lived in 56 B. C., and no Sri Harsha lived in 456 B.C.; but the Eras named after them mean six and ten centuries before the victory of Vikramâditya. Sri Harsha's Era has fallen into disuse; the Samvat is still in universal use.

The supposition is not unlikely, for the naming of an old Era after a ruling king or emperor is not unknown. Holtzmann pointed out many years ago that "to assign to Vikramâditya the first year of his Era might be quite as great a mistake as we should commit by placing Pope Gregory XIII in the year One of the Gregorian Calendar, or even Julius Cæsar in the first year of the Julian Period." Dr. Fergusson's theory of the origin of the Samvat Era has, so far, been accepted by scholars; but whether it be finally accepted or not, the date of Vikramâditya and of Kâlidâsa has been fixed in the 6th century A. D., beyond the possibility of any future correction.

We now proceed, for facility of reference, to give a table of dates for the different Epochs, premising, that the dates should be taken as only approximately

correct, and that the earlier dates are only supposed to be correct within two or three centuries.

EPOCH I. VEDIC PERIOD.

Aryan settlement in the Indus Valley ... ... Composition of the Rig Veda hymns	B. C. 2000 to 1400

EPOCH II. EPIC PERIOD.

Aryan settlements in the Ganges Valley	B. C. 1400 to 1000
Lunar Zodiac fixed. Astronomical Observations	B. C. 1400 to 1200
Compilation of the Vedas ...	B. C. 1400 to 1200
Flourishing Period of the Kurus and the Panchâlas	B. C. 1400 to 1200
Kuru Panchâla War	B. C. 1250
Flourishing Period of the Kosalas, the Kâsis, and Videhas	B. C. 1200 to 1000
Composition of the Brâhmanas and Âranyakas	B. C. 1300 to 1100
Composition of the Upanishads	B. C. 1100 to 900

EPOCH III. PHILOSOPHICAL PERIOD.

Aryan Conquest of all India ...	B. C. 1000 to 242
Yâska	B. C. 9th century (?)
Pânini	B. C. 8th century (?)
Sûtra Schools	B. C. 800 to 300
Sulva Sutras (Geometry) ...	B. C. 8th century.
Kapila and Sânkhya Philosophy	B. C. 700

Other Schools of Philosophy ...	B. C.	600 to 100
Gautama Buddha	B. C.	557 to 477
Bimbi Sâra, King of Magadha	B. C.	537 to 485
Ajata Satru " " ...	B. C.	485 to 453
First Buddhist Council ...	B. C.	477
Second Buddhist Council ...	B. C.	377
Nine Nandas, Kings of Magadha	B. C.	370 to 320
Chandragupta, King of Magadha	B. C.	320 to 291
Bindu Sâra, King of Magadha...	B. C.	291 to 263
Asoka, sub-king of Ujjayinî ...	B. C.	263 to 259
Ditto Emperor	B. C.	259 to 222
Third Buddhist Council ...	B. C.	242
Mahendra sent to Ceylon ...	B. C.	241
Kâtyâyana attacks Pânini ...	B. C.	4th century
Patanjali defends Pânini ...	B. C.	2nd century
Saurâshtra and Bengal colonized by Aryans ...	B. C.	800 to 500 (?)
Andhra Kingdom founded ...	B. C.	600 (?)
Chola, Chera, and Pandya Kingdoms founded ...	B. C.	400 (?)
Buddhist Missionaries in Orissa	B. C.	500 to 200

EPOCH IV. BUDDHIST PERIOD.

Prevalence of Buddhism ...	B. C.	242 to A.D. 500
The Mayura Dynasty (from Chandragupta) in Magadha ...	B. C.	320 to B. C. 183
The Sunga Dynasty in Magadha	B. C.	183 to " 71
The Kânva Dynasty in Magadha	B. C.	71 to " 26
The Andhra Dynasty in Magadha	B. C.	26 to A.D. 430

The Gupta Emperors ...	A. D. 400 to A.D. 500
Bactrians invaded India ...	B. C. 2nd & 1st century
Yu-Chi invaded India	B. C. & A. D. 1st century.
Kanishka the Yu Chi King, of Kashmîra, held the Council of Northern Buddhists, or died ...	A. D. 78
The Shah Kings ruled in Saurâshtra	A. D. 150 to 300
Cambojians (from Kabul and Kandahar) invaded India ...	A. D. 200 to 400
The White Huns invaded India	A. D. 4th & 5th centuries.

EPOCH V. PAURANIK PERIOD.

Hindu Revival ...	A. D. 500 to 1194
Vikramâditya of Ujjayinî and Northern India	A. D. 515 to 550
Vikramâditya beat back the foreign invaders in the Battle of Korur, or died	A. D. 544
Kâlidâsa, Amarasinha, Vararuchi, &c.	A. D. 500 to 550
Bhâravi, about	A. D. 550 to 600
Âryabhatta, Founder of Modern Hindu Astronomy ...	A. D. 476 to 530
Varâhamihira	A. D. 500 to 550
Author of Sûrya Suddhanta ...	A. D. 550 to 600
Brahmagupta	A. D. 598 to 650

Sîlâditya II., Emperor of Northern India...	A. D.	610 to 650
Dandin	A. D.	570 to 620
Bâna Bhatta and Subandbu ... Bhartrihari and Bhattikâvya ...	A. D	610 to 650
Houen Tsang visited Sîlâditya's court	A. D.	640
Yasovarman, King of Northern India ... ... Bhavabhûti	A. D.	700 to 730
Ballabhi Kings of Western India	A. D.	470 to 720
Destruction of ancient dynasties and rise of the Rajputs ...	A. D.	750 to 950
Sankarâchârya ...	A. D.	788 to 850
Persecution of Buddhists ...	A. D.	800 to 950
Rajputs, Masters of Northern India. Modern Hinduism finally established ...	A. D.	950 to 1194
Chalukya Kings of the Deccan	A. D.	500 to 1200
Pâla Kings of Bengal... ...	A. D.	850 to 1150
Sena Kings of Bengal ...	A. D.	1000 to 1204
Kesari line of Orissa ...	A. D.	476 to 1132
Gangetic line of Orissa ...	A. D.	1132 to 1534
The Bellala dynasty of the Carnatic	A. D.	11th century.
The Kakati Dynasty of Warrangal	A. D.	1200 to 1323

The Kingdom of Vijzayanagra	A. D. 1344 to 1565
Bhâskarâchârya	A. D. 12th century.
Jayadeva Sri Harsha, Mâgha, &c.	A. D. 12th century.
Sâyanâchârya	A. D. 14th century.

BOOK I

VEDIC PERIOD. B. C 2000 TO B. C. 1400.

CHAPTER I.

IMMIGRATION OF THE INDO-ARYANS.—THEIR LITERATURE.

THE site of the early home of the Aryans has been a subject of endless controversies among scholars. Enthusiastic and patriotic Hindu scholars will not admit that the first home of the Aryans was anywhere outside India ; while equally patriotic European scholars would place the seat of the primitive Aryans on the shores of the Baltic Sea. We need hardly say that it is not our object to enter into this discussion ; and we merely repeat here the theory of all moderate thinkers that the early home of the Aryans was somewhere in Central Asia.

The main arguments on which this conclusion is based have been summed up by Professor Max Müller in a recent work, and we quote them for our readers :—

" Firstly, we have two streams of language, one tending south-east to India, and the other north-west to Europe. The point where these two streams naturally intersect, points to Asia."

"'Secondly, the earliest centres of civilized life were in Asia.' And we may add that the most primitive form of all Aryan languages—the nearest approach to that language which was spoken by the common ancestors of all Aryan races—is the Vedic Sanscrit of Ancient India.

"Thirdly, we see in later times large ethnic waves, rising from Central Asia and overwhelming Europe. Such are the Huns in the fourth and the Mongols in the thirteenth century.

"'Fourthly, if the migration had taken place from Europe to Asia, particularly from Scandinavia, we should naturally look in the common Aryan language for a number of words connected with maritime life.' But this is not the case. While we find common names for particular animals and birds, and even common names for animals (*pasu*) and birds (*vi*) in general, we find no names for special fishes, and no general name for fish, nor even is there a common name for the sea!"

Various pictures, more or less imaginary, of the civilization of the early Aryans before they separated, have been drawn by various scholars from the slender materials of the words which are found in common use among the different Aryan nations in the world. Pictet's work in two large volumes, published in Paris in 1859-63, created a wider interest than any preceding attempt of a similar nature; and this was followed by Dr. Fick's work in 1868, and Dr. Hehn's

work in 1870. It is not our intention to draw such pictures here ; we will only give a few facts about the life of the primitive Aryans, about which there is no dispute.

The domestic economy among the early Aryans was much the same as it is among the Aryan nations of the present day. The historian of man does not find in Aryan history any traces of Hatairism (or of promiscuous relationship between the sexes), of families being reckoned on the mother's side, or of inheritance by the female line. On the contrary, the father was the protector and the nourisher of the family, the mother looked after and fed the children, the daughter milked the cattle, and relationship by marriage was recognized. Probably the primitive Aryans had already reached a higher state of civilization than promiscuous living would imply. The family, and not the tribe, was the unit of society ; and the father was the head of the family.

Many of the useful animals had been domesticated and brought under the service of man. The cow, the bull, the ox, the sheep, the goat, the swine, the dog, and the horse had all been domesticated. The wild bear, the wolf, the hare, and the dreaded serpent were known. Similarly among birds, the goose, the duck, the cuckoo, the raven, the quail, the crane, and the owl were well known to the early Aryans.

The various industries were still in their infancy ;

but a commencement in manufactures and arts had been made. The Aryans built houses, villages and towns, made roads, and constructed boats for communication by water or for a humble kind of trade. Weaving, spinning, and plaiting were known, and furs, skins, and woollen fabrics were made into garments. Carpentry must have made a considerable progress, and dyeing was known.

It need scarcely be stated that agriculture was practised by the primitive Aryans; and it was this occupation which probably gave them their name (*Ârya* = cultivator). Many words familiar to cultivators like the plough, the waggon, the cart, the wheel, the axle, the yoke, in common use among the Aryan nations, point to the same primitive roots from which they have been derived. Corn was ground, prepared and cooked in various ways; while the flocks of sheep and cows by which every family was surrounded afforded milk and meat. There can be little doubt, that, although agriculture was largely resorted to, many patriarchs of families used also to rove about from place to place with their attendants and flocks in search of new pastures, and a fairly large portion of the early Aryans led a nomad life. Of this we have some trace even in the Rig Veda, as we shall see farther on.

War was not infrequent in those primitive times, and weapons of bone and of wood, of stone and of metals,

were known. The bow and the arrow, the sword and the spear seem to have been the weapons of war.

It argues some advance in civilization that the use of gold and of silver was undoubtedly known to the early Aryans ; and with the simplicity of early races, they called gold by the name " yellow " and silver by the name " white." A third metal (*ayas*) was also known, but it is doubtful if it was iron.

It is perhaps impossible to conjecture the sort of government which obtained in those olden days. Patriarchs of tribes and leaders of men undoubtedly obtained ascendancy, and the simple subjects looked up to them and called them the protectors or nourishers of men, or the shining (*Pati*, *Vispati*, *Râja*) chief in war as well as in peace. The natural feelings of civilized man distinguished between right and wrong, and custom and a vague perception of what was good for the nation had the force of law.

And lastly, the primitive religion of the Aryans was suggested by whatever was beautiful and striking in the phenomena of Nature. The sky or the bright sky was an eternal object of wonder and of worship. The sun, the dawn, the fire, and the earth, the storms and the clouds and the thunder, all received worship. But religion was still simple and archaic. Myths and legends about the gods and their relationship had not yet multiplied ; elaborate rites and ceremonials had not yet been fabricated. The bold forefathers of the Aryan

nations looked up with a manly veneration to whatever was wondrous and beautiful in Nature, imagined such manifestations as instinct with deity, and offered their praise and their prayers with a grateful and fervent heart.

Adventurous bands of Aryans left their home in Central Asia from time to time in quest of food or pasture, of kingdoms or plunder. The exact order in which the forefathers of the different nations left has not been ascertained, and will never be ascertained. Professor Max Müller holds that the first division of the Aryan race was divided into two branches, *viz.*, the North-Western or European, and the South-Eastern or Asiatic; and that, after they became once separated, the two branches never met again. The North-Western branch travelled towards Europe; divisions took place, and five distinct races occupied five different portions of Europe at periods which cannot be ascertained. The Celts settled, or were more probably driven onwards by other races to settle, in the extreme west of Europe, in France, Ireland, Great Britain, and Belgium; the robust Tutons settled in central Europe, from which they issued after the downfall of Rome to conquer the whole of Europe; the Slavs settled in eastern Europe, *i.e.*, in Russia and other places; and the Italic and Greek divisions settled in the south of Europe.

The Asiatic branch travelled southwards, and according to Max Müller, the still undivided Indo-Iranians

came as far as the Indus, to the land of the seven rivers, or the Punjab. Here, "within sight of the Indus and its tributaries, the undivided South - Eastern Aryans spoke a language more primitive than the Sanscrit or Zend." Religious schism then separated them; the worshippers of the Devas or the Hindus remained in the Punjab, the worshippers of the Asuras or the Iranians went away to Persia.*

It is the worshippers of the Devas—the Hindu Aryans—who have composed those hymns which are known as the Rig Veda, and we will say a few words here about this ancient work. Probably there is not another work in the literature of mankind which is so deeply interesting, so unique in the lessons it imparts. The hoary antiquity of this ancient work, the picture it affords of the earliest form of civilization that the Aryans developed in any part of the world, and the flood of light it throws on the origin of the myths and religions of all Aryan nations,—these alone would make the Rig Veda deeply interesting.

But the work has a yet higher import, a deeper significance. To the philosophical historian of man the Rig Veda discloses the origin of religious faith and religious

* The opinion however, which has hitherto been generally accepted is that the separation between the Hindus and the Iranians took place before the race came to the Indus; and that the Indo-Aryans came to India in consequence of the religious schism and consequent dissensions.

feelings. It explains how the mind of man in its infancy worships what is bright and glorious in nature, what is powerful and striking. Among less happy nations, religion began with the dread of diseases and of evils, as these made the most lasting impression on the mind. But among the Aryans, the brighter and pleasanter aspects of nature,—the bright sky, the blushing dawn, the rising sun, and the glowing fire, created the deepest impression, and called forth songs of gratitude and praise and worship. This is the Rig Veda Sanhitâ,—this is the earliest form of Aryan religion known.

But the Rig Veda is more than this. It shows us how the mind is led from Nature up to Nature's God. For the sages of the Rig Veda do not always remain satisfied with the worship of the manifestations of Nature; they sometimes soar higher, and dare to conceive that all these phenomena—the sun, the sky, the storms, and the thunder—are but the actions of the Unknowable One. It is in the very latest hymns of the Veda that we find these daring guesses after truth,—this bold conception of one God.

And if such is the value of the Rig Veda to the historian of man, its value to the historian of Aryan nations is still greater. It is the oldest work in the Aryan world. It gives us a picture of the oldest civilization which the Aryans developed in any part of the world; and as we have said before, it enlightens and clears up much that is dark and obscure in the religions and myths of

Aryan nations all over the world. It would be entirely foreign to our present object to illustrate this by instances, but some instances are so well known as to merely require a mention to illustrate our views.

Zeus or Jupiter is the Vedic Dyu, or the sky; Daphne and Athena are the Vedic Dahanâ and Ahanâ, the dawn; Uranus is Varuna, the sky; and probably, Prometheus and Hephaistos are the Vedic Pramantha and Yavishtha, the fire!

To the Hindus the Rig Veda is a work of still higher importance. It explains the whole fabric of the later Hindu religion; it clears all the complications of later mythology; it throws light on the history of the Hindu mind from its earliest stage of infancy to the latest times. The Hindu learns from this ancient and priceless volume that Vishnu the supreme preserver, and his three steps covering the universe, mean the sun at its rise, its zenith, and when setting; that the terrible god Rudra the supreme destroyer, originally meant the thunder or thunder-cloud; and that Brahmâ the supreme creator, was originally prayer or the god of prayer. And lastly, he learns that Râma and Krishna, Durgâ and Lakshmî, Ganesa and Kârtikeya, are later creations of the Paurânik fancy, and were unknown to the first Aryans in India.

Historically, and socially too, the Hindu has much to learn from the Veda. For the Rig Veda gives us a picture of society when there were no caste distinctions,

when widows were married, and women had their legitimate influence in the society in which they lived and moved.

The Veda consists of 1,028 hymns, comprising over ten thousand verses. The hymns are addressed to Nature-gods, of whom a full account will be given later on.

The hymns are generally simple, and betray a child-like and simple faith in the gods, to whom sacrifices are offered, and libations of the Soma juice are poured, and who are asked for increase of progeny, cattle, and wealth, and implored to help the Aryans in their still doubtful struggle against the black aboriginies of the Punjab.

The hymns of the Rig Veda are divided into ten Mandalas or Books, and with the exception of the first and the last books, every one of the remaining eight books contains hymns said to have been composed or rather proclaimed by one Rishi,—by which we may understand one family or line of teachers. Thus the second book is by Gritsamada, who is said to be the same as Saunaka; the third by Visvâmitra; the fourth by Bâmadeva; the fifth by Atri; the sixth by Bhâradvâja; the seventh by Vasishtha; the eighth by Kanva; and the ninth by Angiras. The first book contains 191 hymns, which with scattered exceptions, are composed by fifteen Rishis; and the tenth book also contains 191 hymns, which are mostly ascribed to fictitious authors.

The attempt to separate the older hymns from the new, and to assign a separate period for each, has not succeeded, and is never likely to succeed. Nevertheless, the most careless student of the Veda cannot help noticing that the tenth or last Mandala of the Rig Veda stands apart from the other nine, and looks like a later appendage; and most of the hymns of this book are comparatively recent hymns. One can almost lay his finger on many of the hymns of this book which are undoubtedly recent, comparatively speaking. They disclose a higher development of ideas, a more matured state of speculations, and often a grosser superstition, and a more artificial state of society. Such are the hymns which describe the future world, or lay down the rituals for marriage or funeral; and such are the obscure speculations about the unity of God. Such again are the Mantras against diseases, &c., similar to the hymns of the Atharva Veda, which is admittedly a later work. Most of the hymns of the tenth Book of the Rig Veda again are ascribed to gods, as if the real authors were anxious to conceal the late origin of the hymns by this device!

The hymns of the Rig Veda were handed down from father to son, or from teacher to pupil for centuries together, and it was in a later age, in the Epic Period, that they were arranged and compiled. The whole, or greater portion of the tenth Book, seems to have been the production of this later period, but was thrown in and preserved with the body of the older hymns.

The arrangement and compilation of the Rig Veda hymns in their present shape must have been completed within the Epic Period. In Aitareya Âranyaka II, 2, we have fanciful derivations given of the names of the Rishis of the Rig Veda in the order in which the Mandalas are arranged. And this is followed by an account of a Sûkta or hymn, of a Rik or verse, of a half Rik, of a Pada or word, and of an Akshara or syllable. The Rig Veda Sanhitâ therefore had not only been arranged Mandala by Mandala, but had been carefully divided, subdivided, and analysed within the Epic Period.

By the close of the Epic Period, every verse, every word, every syllable of the Rig Veda had been counted. The number of verses, as computed, varies from 10,402 to 10,622, that of words is 153,826, that of syllables 432,000.

CHAPTER II.

AGRICULTURE, PASTURE, AND COMMERCE.

THE main industry of the ancient Hindus, as of the modern Hindus, was agriculture; and as might be expected, we have frequent allusions to it in the Rig Veda. The very name Ârya by which the Aryan conquerors of India have distinguished themselves from the aborigines or Dâsas, is said to come from a root which means to cultivate. Professor Max Müller has traced the progress of this word all over the Aryan world, from Iran or Persia, to Erin or Ireland, and argues with considerable force that the word was invented in the primeval home of the Aryans in Central Asia, to indicate their partiality to cultivation, as distinguished from the nomadic habits of the Turanians, whose name indicates their rapid journies or the fleetness of their horse. Certain it is that the word Ârya is the one word in the Rig Vêda which distinguishes the conquerors as a class, or even as a caste, from the aborigines of the country. And there are remarkable passages also which show that the new settlers, in calling themselves Ârya, had not altogether forgotten the real signification of the word. One instance will suffice :—

" O ye two Asvins! you have displayed your glory

by teaching the *Ârya* to cultivate with the plough and to sow corn, and by giving him rains for (the production of) his food, and by destroying the *Dasyu* by your thunderbolt." (I, 117, 21.)

There are two other words in the Rig Veda which are synonymous, not so much with the Aryan tribe, but rather with man generally; and both of them come from roots which indicate cultivation. The words are *Charshana* (I, 3, 7, &c.) and *Krishti* (I, 4, 6 &c.), and both these words come from modifications of the same root *Krish* or *Chrish* to cultivate.

Thus the very names which the Aryan conquerors of India gave themselves are names which indicate that useful occupation which distinguishes the civilized man from the barbarian, *viz.*, cultivation of the soil.

There are numerous direct allusions in the Rig Veda to agriculture, but the most remarkable among them is a hymn which is dedicated to a supposed god of agriculture, the Lord of the Field as he is called, and which we will translate in full:—

"1. We will win (cultivate) this field with the Lord of the Field; may he nourish our cattle and our horses; may he bless us thereby.

"2. O Lord of the Field! bestow on us sweet and pure and butter-like and delicious and copious rain, even as cows give us milk. May the Lords of the water bless us.

"3. May the plants be sweet unto us; may the skies

and the rains and the firmament be full of sweetness; may the Lord of the Field be gracious to us. We will follow him uninjured by enemies.

"4. Let the oxen work merrily; let the men work merrily; let the plough move on merrily. Fasten the traces merrily; ply the goad merrily.

"5. O Suna and Sîra! accept this hymn. Moisten this earth with the rain you have created in the sky.

"6. O fortunate Furrow! proceed onwards, we pray unto thee; do thou bestow on us wealth and an abundant crop.

"7. May Indra accept this Furrow; may Pûshan lead her onwards. May she be filled with water, and yield us corn year after year.*

"8. Let the plough shares turn up the sod merrily; let the men follow the oxen merrily; may Parjanya moisten the earth with sweet rains. O Suna and Sîra! bestow on us happiness." (IV, 57.)

We shall seek in vain in the entire range of later Sanscrit literature for a passage in which the humble hopes and wishes of simple agriculturists are so naturally described. This is the unique charm of the Rig

* In these two remarkable verses, the furrow, Sîtâ, is addressed as a female, and asked to yield copious harvests. In the Yajur Veda also, the furrow is similarly worshipped. And when the Aryans gradually conquered the whole of India, and primeval jungles and waste lands were marked with the furrow, the furrow or Sîtâ assumed a more definite human character, and became the heroine of the Epic which describes the Aryan conquest of Southern India.

Veda as a literary composition. Whether it is an account of a battle with aborigines, or a prayer to friendly Indra to come and have a cup of Soma, or a song of the simple cultivator,—the Rig Veda hymn always takes us nearer to the simple workings of a simple but straightforward and manly heart than anything in the literature of later times.

We will translate a portion of another hymn, also dedicated to agriculture:—

"3. Fasten the ploughs, spread out the yokes, and sow the seed on this field which has been prepared. Let the corn grow with our hymns; let the scythes fall on the neighbouring fields where the corn is ripe.

"4. The ploughs have been fastened; the labourers have spread the yokes; the wise men are uttering prayers to gods.

"5. Prepare troughs for the drinking of the animals. Fasten the leather-string, and let us take out water from this deep and goodly well which never dries up.

"6. The troughs have been prepared for the animals; the leather-string shines in the deep and goodly well which never dries up, and the water is easily got. Take out water from the well.

"7. Refresh the horses; take up the corn stacked in the field; and make a cart which will convey it easily. This well full of water for the drinking of animals, is one *drona* in extent, and there is a stone wheel to it.

And the reservoir for the drinking of men is one *skanda*. Fill it with water." (X, 101.)

Irrigation and cultivation in the Punjab are only possible by means of wells, and wells are reserved also for the drinking of men and of beasts; and it is not surprising therefore that we should find references to wells in the Rig Veda. Another remarkable fact which appears from the passages translated above is that horses were used for cultivation in those days, a custom still common in Europe, but not in India in modern times.

In X, 25, 4, and in many other places we have allusions to wells. In X, 93, 13, we are told how water was raised from wells for irrigation. The contrivance is the same as is still in vogue in Northern India; a number of pots are tied to a string, and as the pots go up and down by the movement of a wheel, they are filled in the well and pulled up and emptied and sent down again. The contrivance is called *ghatichakra*, or the circle of pots, and bears the same name to the present day.

In X, 99, 4, we have another allusion to irrigation of fields by means of canals which were replenished with water by means of a *drona*. And in X, 68, 1, we are told that cultivators who irrigated their fields kept away birds by uttering loud cries.

As stated above, the allusions to pasture are by no means so frequent as the allusions to agriculture.

Pûshan is the god of shepherds,—he is the sun as viewed by shepherds,—and is supposed to protect them and travellers generally in their wanderings over the country. And here and there in a hymn to Pûshan, we find that the Aryans of India had brought with them recollections and songs about those migrations which they occasionally undertook in Central Asia, if not after their settlement in India. We translate one such hymn below :—

"1. O Pûshan! help us to finish our journey, and remove all dangers. O Son of the Cloud, do thou march before us!

"2. O Pûshan! do thou remove from our path him who would lead us astray, who strikes and plunders and does wrong.

"3. Do thou drive away that wily robber who intercepts journeys.

"4. Do thou trample under thy foot the vile carcass of him who plunders us in both ways (by stealth and by force) and who commits outrages.

"5. O wise Pûshan, destroyer of enemies! we implore of thee the protection with which thou didst shield and encourage our forefathers.

"6. O Pûshan, possessed of all wealth, possessed of golden weapons, and chief among beings! bestow on us thy riches.

"7. Lead us so that enemies who intercept may not harm us; lead us by an easy and pleasant path.

O Pûshan! devise means (for our safety) on this journey.

"8. Lead us to pleasant tracts covered with green grass; let there be no extreme heat by the way. O Pûshan! devise means (for our safety) on this journey.

"9. Be powerful (in thy protection); fill us (with riches); bestow on us (wealth); make us strong and give us food! O Pûshan! devise means (for our safety) on this journey.

"10. We do not blame Pûshan; but we extol him in our hymns. We solicit wealth from the handsome Pûshan." I, 42.

There is also another interesting hymn on the practice of taking out cattle to pasture fields, and then bringing them back. A few verses are worth translating:—

"4. We call the cowherd, let him take out these cows; let him pasture them in the fields; let him know and pick out the animals; let him bring them back to the house; let him pasture them on all sides.

"5. The cowherd seeks for the cows and brings them back to the house; he pastures them on all sides. May he come home safe.

"8. O cowherd! pasture the cows in all directions, and bring them back. Pasture them in various parts of the earth, and then bring them back." (X, 19.)

There are allusions in the preceding passages to robbers who infested outlying tracts of the country,—

probably to the cattle-lifters and thieves among the aboriginal races, who hung around the Aryan villages and clearances, and lived by intercepting peaceful industry. We shall speak of them further on.

Allusions to trade and commerce must be necessarily rare in a collection of hymns to gods; but, nevertheless, we are here and there surprised by passages which throw a curious light on the manners of the times. Loans and usury were well understood in those days, and Rishis (who, we should always remember, were worldly men in those days, and not hermits or anchorites) occasionally lament their state of indebtedness with the simplicity of primitive times. In one remarkable verse again, we are reminded of the finality of a sale-transaction, when once the sale is completed:—

"One sells a large quantity for a small price, and then goes to the purchaser and denies the sale, and asks for a higher price. But he cannot exceed the price once fixed on the plea that he has given a large quantity. Whether the price was adequate or inadequate, the price fixed at the time of sale must hold good." IV, 24, 9.

A passage like the above would indicate the existence of current money for the purposes of buying and selling. We have numerous instances of Rishis acknowledging the gift of a hundred pieces of gold (V, 27, 2, &c.), and there can be no doubt, pieces of gold of a certain fixed value were used as money and indicated in these passages. Professor Wilson in his note on the above

verse (V, 27, 2), thinks "that pieces of money are intended; for if we may trust Arian, the Hindus had coined money before Alexander." We must admit however, that there is no distinct allusion to *coined* money in the Rig Veda. The word *Nishka* (I, 126, 2, &c.) is often used in the Rig Veda in a dubious sense. In some passages it means money, in others it means a golden ornament for the neck;—the two interpretations are not necessarily contradictory, for in India pieces of gold used as money have habitually been used as ornaments for the neck since times immemorial.

On the other hand, there are distinct references to voyages by sea, though of course, the words used may mean rivers only, and not the sea. The shipwreck of Bhujyu, and his deliverance by the gods Asvins, is constantly alluded to (I, 116, 3, &c.), and in I, 25, 7, the god Varuna is said to know the paths of the birds through the sky, and the paths of the ships over the sea. In IV, 55, 6, the poet refers to the "people who desiring to acquire wealth pray to the sea before undertaking a voyage;" while in VII, 88, 3, Vasishtha says:—

"When Varuna and I went on a boat and took her out to sea, I lived in the boat floating on the water and was happy in it, rocking gracefully (on the waves)."

While there are these and other distinct allusions to voyage, there is absolutely no prohibition against it in the Rig Veda.

CHAPTER III.

FOOD, CLOTHING, AND THE ARTS OF PEACE.

BARLEY and wheat seem to have been the principal produce of the field, and the principal articles of food. The names of grain found in the Rig Veda are somewhat misleading, as they have come to bear a different signification in modern days from what they had in the ancient times. Thus the word *Yava*, which in modern Sanscrit implies barley only, was used in the Veda for implying food-grains generally, including wheat and barley. And the word *Dhâna* which, in Bengal at least, means paddy or rice, implies in the Rig Veda fried barley, which was used as food and offered to the gods. There is no allusion to *vrîhi* (rice) in the Rig Veda.

We also find mention of various kinds of cakes prepared from these grains and used as food and offered to the gods. *Pakti* (from *pach*, to cook, or to prepare) means prepared cakes, and various other terms like *Purodâsa* and *Apûpa* and *Karambha*, are also used. (III, 52, 1 & 2; IV, 24, 7, &c.)

It may be easily imagined that animal food was largely used by the early Hindus of the Punjab. We have frequent allusions to the sacrifice and to the cooking

of cows, buffaloes, and bulls. (I, 61, 12; II, 7, 5; V, 29, 7 and 8; VI, 17, 11; VI, 16, 47; VI, 28, 4; X, 27, 2; X, 28, 3., etc.)

In X, 89, 14, there is mention of slaughter-house where cows were killed, and in X, 91, 14, there is an allusion to the sacrifice of horses, bulls, and rams. The allusions to the sacrifice of horse are extremely rare, showing that, although the custom was introduced into India by the early Aryans from their primitive home in Central Asia, the flesh of horse as an article of food soon fell into disuse. In later times the sacrifice of the horse at the *Asvamedha* was performed on rare occasions with great pomp and circumstance by powerful kings, after they had subdued their neighbours and assumed a title answering to the Imperial title in Europe. There can be no doubt this great imperial rite rose out of the simple sacrifice of the horse practised in primitive times when the horse was still an article of food. The pomp and ceremony, as well as certain revolting rites connected with horse-sacrifice in later days, were unknown in Vedic times.

A fairly complete account of the sacrifice of the horse, such as it prevailed in the Vedic times, is to be found in hymn 162 of the first Mandala of the Rig Veda. It is too long for translation, but a few verses may interest our readers:—

"2. The men have brought the prepared offering before the horse which is covered with gold trappings.

The piebald goat bleats and goes towards the horse; may it be an acceptable offering for Indra and Pûshan.

"11. O horse! the gravy which comes out of your body when you are roasted, escaping from the roasting spit, should not fall to the ground nor get mixed with the grass. The gods are eager for the food; let it be offered to them!

"12. Those who stand around and watch the cooking of the horse, those who say—Its smell is delicious, take it down now, and those who beg a portion of the meat,—let the aims of all of them be in furtherance of our aims.

"13. The stick, which is dipped into the boiling pot, the vessels in which the gravy is kept, the covers which keep it warm, the cane by which the body of the horse is first marked, and the knife by which the body is dissected (along the lines marked), all these implements help in the cooking of the horse.

"18. The knife goes as a friend of the gods to separate the thirty-four ribs of the horse. Cut them out, so that the separate parts may not be cut or mangled. With a loud voice, and with circumspection, cut away along the joints.

"20. Go to the gods, O horse! let not thy dear body pain thee; let not the knife rest long on thy limbs; let not a greedy and ignorant immolator cut thy body needlessly, disregarding the separate limbs."

Who could have believed that this simple horse sacrifice of the Rig Veda, the carving and the roasting and the boiling of the horse for worship and for the purposes of food, would have developed into the imperial ceremony of *Asvamedha* of later times? But many a practice which we see in its simple and natural aspect in the Veda has developed into mighty and often monstrous ceremonies in later days; and many a simple Vedic allegory relating to the striking phenomena of Nature has also developed into equally monstrous Pauranik legends. Herein constitutes the true value of the Veda; we trace in it Hindu rites and institutions and the Hindu religion itself to their simple natural beginnings.

The fermented juice of the plant called *Soma* appears to have been the only intoxicating drink used in the Vedic times. So much were the ancient Aryans addicted to this drink that Soma was soon worshipped as a deity both in India and in Iran (under the name *Haoma* in the latter country), and we find one entire Mandala or Book of the Rig Veda dedicated to this deity. The Indo-Aryans appear to have been more addicted to fermented and intoxicating Soma than their peaceful brethren of Iran; and many are the allusions in the Zendavesta to the hateful customs of their Indian brethren. Some antiquarians think that this was one great reason of those dissensions which broke out among the southern Aryans, and which led to the final separation of the Iranians from the Hindus.

The process by which the Soma-juice was prepared has been fully described in IX, 66, and in other hymns. We will translate a few verses from this hymn :—

"2. O Soma! your two leaves alternated, and you attained a wonderful glory thereby.

"3. O Soma! the leaves covered thee—a creeper—on all sides, and you flourished in all seasons.

"7. O Soma! you have been crushed; you flow as a stream to Indra, scattering joy on all sides; you bestow immortal food.

"8. Seven women stir thee with their fingers, blending their voices in a song to thee; you remind the sacrificer of his duties at the sacrifice.

"9. You mix with water with a pleasing sound; and the fingers stir you over a woollen strainer, and filter you. Your particles are thrown up then, and a sound arises from the woollen strainer.

"11. The woollen strainer is placed on a vessel, and the fingers repeatedly stir the Soma, which sends out a sweet stream into the vessel.

"13. O Soma! you are then mixed with milk. Water runs towards thee with a pleasing sound."

From this description it would appear that the juice of Soma used to be taken—much as *Siddhi* is taken in our times—mixed with milk. The poets of the Rig Veda go into ecstasy over the virtues and the exhilarating powers of the Soma; and some of their descriptions have developed into strange Pauranik legends in

subsequent times. One or two verses will illustrate this :—

"O Soma! there is nothing so bright as thou. When poured out, thou welcomest all the gods, to bestow on them immortality." (IX, 108, 3.)

"The praiseworthy Soma has from ancient times been the drink of the gods; he was milked from the hidden recesses of the sky; he was created for Indra and was extolled." (IX, 110, 8.)

"In that realm where there is perennial light, and where the Heaven is placed, O Soma, lead me to that deathless and immortal realm! Flow thou for Indra." (IX, 113, 7.)

Such passages as these are to be found throughout the Ninth Book of the Rig Veda. Who could have guessed that the strange Pauranik legends of the churning of the ocean and the discovery of the *Amrita* or immortal drink could have arisen from these simple Vedic descriptions of Soma? The sky in the Veda is considered watery, and is often confused with the sea, and the milking of Soma from the sky would, with the help of a strong Pauranik imagination, be translated into the churning of the ocean for the *Amrita!*

It would appear from many passages in the Rig Veda that many arts were carried to a high state of excellence. Weaving was well-known of course, and deft female fingers wove the warp and the woof in ancient times as in modern days. (II, 3, 6; II, 38, 4, &c.) In

one curious passage (VI, 9, 2), the Rishi laments his ignorance of the mysteries of religious rites by saying: "I know not the warp and I know not the woof" of religious rites; and in another place (X, 26, 6), the weaving and bleaching of sheep's wool is attributed to the god Pûshan, who, as we have already seen, is the god of shepherds.

Every Aryan village had probably its barber then as now; and the clearances of forests by fire are in one passage somewhat mysteriously described as the *shaving* of the earth. (I, 164, 44.) Carpentry was also well known, and we have frequent allusions to the construction of carts and chariots. (III, 53, 19; IV, 2, 14; IV, 16, 20, &c.) The use of iron, of gold, and of other metals was well known; in V, 9, 5, we have a reference to the work of an ironsmith, and in VI, 3, 4, we are told of goldsmiths melting metal.

But we get a better idea of working in metals in the Vedic times from the description of various gold ornaments and iron utensils and implements of war which is to be found throughout the Rig Veda. The allusions are numerous, and we can therefore only make a selection here which will convey a fair idea of the manufactures of those days. We are told of armours used in war in I, 140, 10, in II, 39, 4, in IV, 53, 2, and in various other places. In II, 34, 3, we have reference to golden helmets, and in IV, 34, 9, there is mention of armour for the shoulders or arms, probably a shield.

The lightning has been compared with a javelin (*rishti*) in V, 52, 6, and in V, 54, 11; and also to a sword or battle-axe (*bâshi*), and to bows and arrows and quivers in V, 57, 2. Three thousand mailed warriors are spoken of in VI, 27, 6; feathered, sharp-pointed, shining shafts are described in VI, 46, 11; and sharp-edged swords are spoken of in VI, 47, 10. And in verses 26 and 29 of the same hymn we are told of war-chariots and war-drums. And lastly, in the 75th hymn of the sixth Mandala, we have a spirited account of the arms and accoutrements of war which we will translate for our readers further on.

In IV, 2, 8, we have a reference to horses with golden caparisons, and in IV, 37, 4, V, 19, 3, and many other places, we have allusions to the *Nishka*, a golden ornament worn in the neck. In V, 53, 4, the lighting ornaments of the Maruts are compared with ornaments (*Anji*), with necklaces (*Srak*), with golden breastplates (*Rukma*), and with bracelets and anklets (*Khadi*). In V, 54, 11, we are again told of anklets for the feet, and golden breastplates for the breast, and of golden crowns (*Siprâh hiranmayih*) for the head.

Thus it will be seen that a very considerable advance was made in the manufacture of arms, weapons, and various kinds of ornaments. We have references also to skin vessels for curds (VI, 48, 18), and iron vessels (V, 30, 15), and in several places to iron towns, which must be taken in a figurative sense as signifying strong

forts (VII, 3, 7; VII, 15, 14; VII, 95, 1, &c.). We have also references to a hundred stone-built towns in IV, 30, 20, and other places.

There can be no doubt that in the various rocky and mountainous tracts where the early Hindus extended their colonies, they soon learnt to utilize stone as a durable and cheap material for architecture; and there can be no difficulty in believing that in numerous Hindu towns many structures and surrounding walls were of stone. That the art of building was carried to some degree of excellence appears from many allusions to mansions with thousand pillars (II, 41, 5; V, 62, 6, &c.); but at the same time it must be admitted that there is no distinct allusion in the Rig Veda to the art of sculpture properly so-called. The researches of antiquarians have failed to discover in any part of India traces of sculptured stone of a time long previous to the Buddhist era; and in the numerous great museums of Europe—which are filled with the ancient stone monuments of Egypt and Babylon, of Greece, and of Rome—India is represented mostly by her ancient and wonderful manuscripts.

Most of the animals domesticated at the present day were domesticated in India in the remote period of the Rig Veda. We have spirited accounts of the war-horse in several places. (VI, 46, 13, and 14, &c.)

Indeed, these war-horses were so highly prized by the early Aryans in their battles against the aborigines,

that the horse under the name of *Dadhikrâ* soon became an object of worship; and in IV, 38, we have a spirited account of the respect paid to this god-like being.

In IV, 4, 1, we have a reference to a king riding with his ministers on an elephant. Among other domesticated animals, we have frequent mention of cows, goats, sheep, buffaloes, and dogs, which last were used in carrying burdens.

CHAPTER IV.

WARS AND DISSENSIONS.

As has been stated before, the early Hindus wrested the fertile tracts on the banks of the Indus and its tributaries from the primitive aborigines of the Punjab; but the aborigines did not give up their birthright without a struggle. Retreating before the more civilized organization and valour of the Hindus in the open field, they still hung round in fastnesses and forests near every Hindu settlement and village, harassed them in their communications, waylaid and robbed them at every opportunity, stole their cattle, and often attacked them in considerable force. Well might they exclaim with the Gaels of Scotland, who had been similarly dispossessed of their fertile soil by the conquering Saxons, and had similarly retreated to barren fastnesses:

> "These fertile plains, that softened vale,
> Were once the birthright of the Gael;
> The stranger came with iron hand,
> And from our fathers reft the land.
> Where dwell we now? See rudely swell
> Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
>
> . . . .
>
> Pent in this fortress of the North,
> Think'st thou we will not sally forth

To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend his prey?
Aye, by my soul! while on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share!"

Unfortunately however, they had no poet to hand down to us their view of the case, and the only account we have of this long war of centuries is from the conquering Hindus. It is needless to say that the conquerers viewed the aborigines with the contempt and hatred which have marked the conduct of all conquering tribes, whether on the banks of the Indus seventeen hundred years before Christ, or on the banks of the Mississipi seventeen hundred years after Christ! History repeats itself; and the Punjab was cleared of its non-Aryan aborigines just as the United States of America have, in modern times, been cleared of the many powerful and brave Indian races who lived and hunted and ruled within its primeval forests.

Of these wars with the aborigines we have frequent allusions in the Rig Veda; and a translation of some of these passages will give a better idea of these interminable hostilities than any account that we can give of them. The allusions are so numerous that our only difficulty is in making a selection.

"Indra, who is invoked by many, and is accompanied by his fleet companions, has destroyed by his thunder-

bolt the *Dasyus* and *Simyus* who dwelt on earth, and then he distributed the fields to his white-complexioned friends (Âryans). The thunderer makes the sun shine and the rain to fall." (I, 100, 18.) "Indra with his weapon (the thunderbolt), and full of vigour, destroyed the towns of the *Dasyus*, and wandered at his will O holder of the thunderbolt! be thou cognizant (of our hymns), and cast thy weapon against the *Dasyu*, and increase the vigour and the fame of the *Arya*." (I, 103, 3.)

In the very next hymn, we come across a curious allusion to aboriginal robbers who dwelt on the banks of four small streams called the Sifâ, the Anjasî, the Kulisî, and the Virapatnî, whose courses cannot now be determined. These robbers issued from their fastnesses and harassed the civilized Aryan villages, much in the same way, we suppose, as a true descendant of those aborigines—the Bhil Tantia in our own times—is harassing the peaceful villages of Central India! We translate the two verses below :—

"Kuyava gets scent of the wealth of others and appropriates them. He lives in water and pollutes it. His two wives bathe in the stream; may they be drowned in the depths of the Sifâ river!

"Ayu lives in water in a secret fastness. He flourishes amidst the rise of waters. The rivers Anjasî, Kulisî, and Virapatnî protect him with their waters. (I, 104, 3 & 4.)

We proceed with some more extracts :—

"Indra protects his *Ârya* worshipper in wars. He who protects him on countless occasions, protects him in all wars. He subdues the people who do not perform sacrifices for the benefit of men (Aryans). He flays the enemy of his black skin and kills him and reduces him to ashes. He burns down all who do injury, and all who are cruel. (I, 130, 8.)

"O destroyer of foes! collect together the heads of these marauding troops, and crush them with thy wide foot! Thy foot is wide!

"O Indra! destroy the power of these marauding troops! Throw them into the vile pit—the vast and vile pit!

"O Indra! thou hast destroyed three times fifty such troops! People extol this thy deed; but it is nothing compared to thy prowess!

"O Indra! destroy the Pishâchis who are reddish in appearance and utter fearful yells. Destroy all these Râkshasas."* (I, 133, 2 to 5.)

"O Indra! the poet prays to thee for pleasant food. Thou hast made the earth the bed (burial-ground) of the *Dâsas*. Indra has beautified the three regions with his gifts; he has slayed *Kuyavâcha* for king *Daryoni*.

"O Indra! Rishis still extol that ancient deed of

---

* Pishâchis and Râkshasas may mean imaginary demons. I would rather think, however, that they here refer to the aborigines.

prowess! Thou hast destroyed many marauders to put an end to war; thou hast stormed the towns of enemies who worship no gods; and thou hast bent the weapons of foes who worship no gods. (I, 174, 7 & 8.)

"O Asvins! destroy those who are yelling hideously like dogs, and are coming to destroy us! Slay those who wish to fight with us! You know the way to destroy them. Let each word of those who extol you bring wealth in return. O you truthful ones! accept our prayers. (I, 182, 4.)

"The far-famed and graceful Indra is gracious to men (Aryans)! The destroying and powerful Indra has cast down the head of the malignant *Dâsa!*

"Indra, who slayed Vritra and stormed towns has destroyed the troops of the black *Dâsas*, and has made the earth and the water for Manu.* May he fulfil the wishes of the sacrificer." (II, 20, 6 & 7.)

We know how the Spaniards, the conquerors of America, owed their successes to a very great extent to their horses,—animals previously unknown to the American aborigines, and therefore regarded with a strange terror. It would seem that the war-horses of the early Indo-Aryans inspired the aborigines of India with a similar fear. The following passages, translated

* Here, as elsewhere, Manu is spoken of as the ancestor of the Aryan man. In many places he is spoken of as the originator of cultivation and of the worship of fire which distinguished the Aryans.

from a hymn to *Dadhikrâ*, or the deified war-horse will, therefore be regarded with interest :—

"As people shout and raise a cry after a thief who has purloined a garment, even so the enemies yell and shout at the sight of Dadhikrâ! As birds make a noise at the sight of the hungry hawk on its descent, even so the enemies yell and shout at the sight of Dadhikrâ careering in quest of plunder of food and cattle!

"Enemies fear Dadhikrâ who is radiant and destroying as a thunderbolt. When he beats back a thousand men around him, he becomes excited and uncontrollable in his strength." (IV, 38, 5 & 8.)

It would seem from numerous passages in the Rig Veda that Kutsa was a powerful warrior and a mighty destroyer of the black aborigines. We are told in hymn 16 of the fourth Mandala, that Indra slew the "*Dasyu*, who is wily and impious," to bestow wealth on Kutsa (verse 9); that he helped Kutsa and came to his house with the common object of slaying the *Dasyu* (verse 10); and that he slew fifty thousand "black-complexioned enemies" in the battle (verse 13). In IV, 28, 4, we are told that Indra has made the *Dasyus* devoid of all virtues, and the object of hatred of all men; and in IV, 30, 15, we learn that Indra destroyed five hundred and a thousand *Dâsas*.

We have similar allusions to the subjugation and destruction of *Dasyus* or *Dâsas* in V, 70, 3; VI, 18, 3; and VI, 25, 2; while there is a curious reference to an

unknown region inhabited by the *Dasyus* in VI, 47, 20, which deserves translation :—

"O ye gods! We have travelled and lost our way, and come to a region where cattle do not pasture. The extensive region gives shelter to *Dasyus* only. O Brihaspati! lead us in our search for cattle. O Indra! shew the way to your worshippers who have lost their way."

We have seen that the Aryan poets are sufficiently uncomplimentary in speaking of the shouts and yells of the aboriginal barbarians. The civilized conquerors could scarcely imagine that these yells could form a language, and have therefore in some places described the barbarians as without a language. (V, 29, 10, &c.)

We have spoken before of Kuyava and Ayu, two aboriginal robbers who dwelt in fastnesses surrounded by rivers, and harassed the Aryan villages. We have frequent allusions to another powerful aboriginal leader who is called Krishna, probably because of his black complexion. One of the passages relating to him deserves translation :—

"The fleet Krishna lived on the banks of the Ansumatî river with ten thousand troops. Indra of his own wisdom became cognizant of this loud-yelling chief. He destroyed the marauding host for the benefit of men.

"Indra said : 'I have seen the fleet Krishna. He is lurking in the hidden region near the Ausumatî, like

the sun in a cloud. O Maruts! I desire you to engage in fight, and to destroy him.'

"The fleet Krishna then appeared shining on the banks of the Ausumati. Indra took Brihaspati as his ally, and destroyed the fleet and godless army." (VIII. 96, 13 to 15.)

Not only have the aborigines been described as fond of yells and devoid of a language, but they are in other places considered as scarcely human. We are told in one place:

"We are surrounded on all sides by *Dasyu* tribes. They do not perform sacrifices; they do not believe in anything; their rites are different; they are not men! O destroyer of foes! kill them. Destroy the *Dâsa* race!" (X, 22, 8.)

In X, 49, Indra proclaims that he has deprived the *Dasyu* race of the name of *Ârya* (verse 3); that he has destroyed Navavâstva and Brihadratha of the *Dâsa* race (verse 6); that he cuts the *Dâsas* in twain, "it is for this fate that they have been born!" (Verse 7.)

Such were the aborigines with whom the early Hindus carried on an interminable war, and such was the fate to which they consigned their less civilized neighbours, the primeval owners of the Indian soil! It is abundantly evident that no love was lost between the conquerors and the conquered. It was by ceaseless fighting that the conquerors protected themselves in their newly-conquered country gradually extended the

limits of cultivation, built new villages, threw out new colonies in primeval jungles, and spread the light of civilization and the fame of their prowess around. They dreaded and hated the despised barbarians with a genuine hatred, killed numbers of them when they could, thinned their ranks with their cavalry, called them yelling hounds and men without a tongue and brutes below the rank of men, and almost believed they were born to be slain,—"it is for this fate that they have been born!" On the other hand the stubborn barbarians had their revenge too. Retreating before the more civilized valour of the Hindus, they hung about in every fastness and every bend of a river, they waylaid and robbed travellers, harassed villages, killed or stole cattle, and sometimes fell on the Hindus in great numbers. With that dogged tenacity which is peculiar to barbarians they disputed every inch of ground as they retreated, they interrupted the religious rites of the conquerors, despised their gods, and plundered their wealth. But in spite of every resistance the colonies of the more civilized races extended on every direction, the area of civilization widened, jungles and wastes were brought under cultivation and dotted with villages and royal towns, and the kingdoms of the early Hindus extended over the whole of the Punjab. The barbarians were either exterminated, or retreated before the ever-advancing line of Aryan civilization into those hills and fastnesses which their children still inhabit.

It may be imagined, however, that some among the weaker barbarians preferred abject subjection to extermination or exile. We find traces accordingly in the Rig Veda of *Dasyus* who at last owned the domination of the more powerful race, and who adopted their religion and their rites and even their language. In one place, the poet actually compliments two non-Aryan chiefs who had learnt to speak, and who with many cows made preparation for a feast of Manu, (X, 62, 10.) There are frequent references also to the *Dâsas* who had been subjugated by the Aryans. These, then, were the first *Hindu-ized aborigines* of India.

Our extracts on the subject of wars with the aborigines have been somewhat numerous, but we cannot refrain from quoting one or two passages more about the wars of the mighty conqueror Sudâs :

"8. The wily foes planned destruction, and broke down the embankment of Adîna river (to cause an inundation). But Sudâs filled the earth with his prowess, and Kavi, the son of Chayamâna, fell like a victim.

"9. For the waters of the river flowed through their old channel and did not take a new course ; and Sudâs' horse marched over the country. Indra subdued the hostile and talkative men and their children under Sudâs.

"11. Sudâs earned glory by killing twenty-one men of both regions. As the young priest cuts the kusa grass in the house of sacrifice, even so Sudâs cut his

enemies. The hero Indra sent the Maruts for his succour.

"14. The sixty-six thousand six-hundred and sixty-six warriors of Anu and Druhya, who had desired for cattle, and were hostile to Sudâs, were laid low. These deeds proclaim the glory of Indra!

"17. It was Indra who enabled the poor Sudâs to achieve these deeds. Indra enabled the goat to kill the strong lion. Indra felled the sacrificial post with a needle. He bestowed all the wealth on Sudâs." VII, 18.

The poet who sings these deeds of Sudâs' glory is not unrewarded for his immortal verse. For in verses 22 and 23, he acknowledges with gratitude that the valiant conqueror and beneficent king had rewarded him with two hundred cows and two chariots and four horses with gold trappings!

In a subsequent hymn we are told how ten kings combined against Sudâs, and Sudâs was victorious over them all. A curious description of a battle in this hymn deserves translation :—

"2. Where men raise their banners and meet in battle, where nothing seems to favour us, where the men look up to the sky and tremble, then, O Indra and Varuna! help us and speak to us (words of comfort).

"3. O Indra and Varuna! the ends of the earth seem to be lost, and the noise ascends to the skies! The troops of the enemy are approaching. O Indra and

Varuna! who ever listen to prayers, come near us with your protection.

"4. O Indra and Varuna! you pierced the yet unassailed Bheda, and saved Sudâs. You listened to the prayers of the Tritsus. Their priestly vocation bore fruit in the hour of battle.

"5. O Indra and Varuna! the weapons of the enemy assail me in all directions, the foes assail me among marauding men. You are the owners of both kinds of wealth! Save us in the day of battle.

"6. Both parties invoked Indra and Varuna for wealth at the time of war. But in this battle you protected Sudâs with the Tritsus who were attacked by ten kings.

"7. O Indra and Varuna! the ten kings who did not perform sacrifices were unable, though combined, to beat Sudâs." (VII, 83.)

In VI, 47, there is an address to the war-drum on the eve of battle; and the poet asks that martial instrument to fill the earth and skies with its sound, to rouse movable and immovable objects, to instil fear into the enemy and to drive them away. The address ends with these portentous words: "The drum (*Dundubhi*) sounds loud to proclaim to all men (the hour of battle). Our leaders have mounted their steeds and have collected together. O Indra! let our warriors who fight in chariots win victory."

In a still more remarkable hymn, VI, 75, the pre-

parations and weapons of war have been described in some detail, and a few extracts from it will convey to our readers some idea of military weapons in use in those days :—

"1. When the battle is nigh, and the warrior marches in his armour, he appears like the cloud ! Warrior, let not thy person be pierced ; be victorious ; let thy armour protect you !

"2. We will win cattle with the bow, we will win with the bow ; we will conquer the fierce and proud enemy with the bow ! May the bow foil the desires of the enemy ! We will spread our conquests on all sides with the bow !

"3. The string of the bow when pulled approaches the ear of the archer, making way in battle. It whispers words of consolation to him, and with sound it clasps the arrow, even as a loving wife clasps her husband.

"5. The quiver is like the parent of many arrows ; the many arrows are like its children. It makes a sound, and hangs on the back of the warrior, and furnishes arrows in battle, and conquers the enemy.

"6. The expert charioteer stands on his chariot and drives his horses wheresoever he will. The reins restrain the horses from behind. Sing of their glory !

"7. The horses raise the dust with their hoofs, and career over the field with the chariots, with loud neighings. They do not retreat, but trample the marauding enemies under their feet.

"11. The arrow is feathered; the deer (horn) is its teeth. Well pulled and sent by the cow-leather-string, it falls on the enemy. Wherever men stand together or are separate, there the shafts reap advantage.

"14. The leather guard protects the arm from the abrasion of the bow-string, and coils round the arm like a snake in its convolutions. It knows its work, and is efficient, and protects the warrior in every way.

"15. We extol the arrow which is poisoned, whose face is of iron;* whose stem is of Parjanya." (VI, 75.)

Before concluding our extracts, we will make one more from a hymn about the coronation of kings. It belongs, like all hymns relating to pompous ceremonies, not to the earlier, but to the latest period of the Vedic Age:—

"1. O king! I place you in the station of a king. Be the lord of this country! Be immovable and fixed! Let all the subjects cherish thee! Let not your kingdom be destroyed!

"2. Remain here fixed as the mountain; do not be dethroned! Remain fixed like Indra, and support the kingdom!

"3. Indra has received the sacrificial offerings, and supports the newly-coronated king! Soma blesses him

* This passage shews that the arrow-heads were of iron. Parjanya is the god of rains. Stem of Parjanya probably means stem of reed growing in the rains. Verse 11 shews that arrow-heads were sometimes of deer-horn.

"4. The sky is fixed, the earth is fixed, the mountains are fixed, this universe is fixed. He also is fixed as king among his subjects!

"5. May King Varuna make you immovable! May the good Brihaspati make you immovable; may Indra and Agni support you and make you immovable.

"6. See, I mix these immortal offerings with the immortal Soma-juice. Indra has brought your subjects under your rule, and made them willing to pay you revenue!" (X, 173.)

These extracts are enough. We have elsewhere shewn that the warriors used not only armours but helmets and also protecting armours for the shoulder, probably shields. They used javelins and battle-axes, and sharp-edged swords, beside bows and arrows. All the weapons of wars known elsewhere in ancient time were known in India nearly four thousand years ago. Drums assembled men in battle, banners led them on in compact masses, and the use of war-horses and chariots was well-known. Tame elephants were in use too, and we have allusions to kings riding on richly caparisoned elephants with their ministers (IV, 4, 1); but it does not appear that elephants were regularly used in wars in the Vedic Period, as they were in the third and fourth centuries before Christ when the Greeks came to India.

For the rest, it was a turbulent time when the Vedic warriors lived and fought. They had not only to wage an interminable war against the aborigines, but the

Hindu States were divided among themselves, and a powerful leader was often bent on annexing his neighbour's state. Rishis engaged in sacrifices asked for prowess to conquer the foes, or prayed to the gods for a son who would win victory in battles. Every able-bodied man was a warrior, and was ever prepared to defend his home and his fields and his cattle with his strong right arm. Each Hindu colony or tribe, while attentive to the worship of the gods and to the cultivation of the various arts of peace, was at the same time alive to the fact that its national existence depended on a constant preparedness for war. And the great conglomeration of Hindu tribes which spread from the banks of the Indus to the banks of the Sarasvatî consisted of hardy, brave, and warlike peoples, who maintained their footing in the land, and their independence and national existence by constant struggles, and a determination to win or die.

It is sad to contemplate this state of things. But where is the country in which, in ancient times, tribes and nations had not to maintain a ceaseless war for their aggrandizement, or even for their very existence? And even in modern times, during the two thousand years which have elasped since Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ preached their messages of peace, where shall we seek for the tribe or nation which could hope to reap the results of its peaceful industry without a constant struggle against its neighbours? If a generation has

passed in Europe without a dreadful war, that period is marked in history as a period of exceptional bliss. And even in our own times, with the exception of a few countries advantageously situated, all the nations of Europe are armed to the teeth; all the individuals, by millions, of great kingdoms and empires, are eternally prepared for war, ready on a week's notice to leave their homes and occupations and march to the frontier! Civilization has done much for the cause of humanity; but civilization has not yet converted the sword into the scythe, or enabled man to reap the results of his peaceful industry without a struggle to the death against his neighbour.

CHAPTER V.

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE—THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

IT was by such continuous wars against the aborigines of the soil that the Aryans at last conquered the whole of the Punjab from the Indus to the Sarasvatî, and from the mountains probably to the sea.

As might be expected, we have frequent allusions to the Indus and its five tributaries. Hymn 75 of the tenth Mandala is a remarkable instance, and we will give our readers a translation of the entire hymn :—

"1. O ye streams! The bard celebrates your excellent prowess in the house of the worshipper. They flow in three systems, seven streams in each system. The prowess of the Indus is superior to that of all others.

"2. O Indus! when you ran towards lands rich in food, Varuna opened out the way for you. You flow over a spacious path on the land. You shine above all flowing rivers.

"3. The mighty sound of the Indus ascends above the earth to the sky! She flows with mighty force and in radiant form. Her mighty sound is heard as if

rains are descending from the clouds with great noise. The Indus comes roaring like a bull.

"4. As cows bring milk to their calves, even thus, O Indus, the other streams come sounding to you with their waters! As a king marches with his forces to battle, even thus you march in front with two systems of rivers flowing by your side! *

"5. O Gangâ! O Yamunâ and Sarasvatî and Sutadru (Sutlej) and Parushnî (Ravi)! share this my praise among you! O river combined with Asiknî (Chinab)! O Vitastâ (Jhilam)! O Ârjîkîyâ (Beya), combined with Susomâ (Indus)! hear my words.

"6. O Indus! first thou flowest united Trishtâmâ with Susartu and Rasâ and the Svetî. You unite Krumu (Kurum river) and Gomatî (Gomal river) with Kubhâ (Cabul river) and Mehatnu. You proceed together with these rivers.

"7. The irresistible Indus proceeds straight, white and dazzling in splendour! She is great, and her waters fill all sides with mighty force. Of all the flowing rivers, none is flowing like her! She is wild like a mare, beautiful like a well developed woman!

"8. The Indus is ever young and beautiful. She is rich in horses, in chariots, and in garments; she is rich

* *i.e.*, the tributaries coming from Cabul in the west, and the tributaries flowing through the Punjab in the east, as named in the two following verses.

in gold and is beauteously clad! She is rich in corn and in wool and in straw, and has covered herself with sweet flowers.

"9. The Indus has fastened horses to her easy chariot, and has brought food therein to us. The greatness of the chariot isextolled as mighty; it is irresistible and great and rich in its fame!"

The hymn is remarkable for its power and its beauty, and remarkable also for the extensive vision of the poet who, as Professor Max Müller says, takes in at one swoop three great river-systems, those flowing from the north-west into the Indus, those joining it from the north-east, and in the distance the Ganges and the Jumna with their tributaries. "It shows the widest geographical horizon of the Vedic poets, confined by the snowy mountains in the north, the Indus and the range of the Suleiman mountains in the west, the Indus or the sea in the south, and the valley of the Jumna and Ganges in the east. Beyond that the world, though open, was unknown to the Vedic poets."

The rivers of the Punjab are sometimes spoken of together as the "seven rivers," and it is explained in one place (VII, 36, 6), that the seven rivers have the Indus for their mother and the Sarasvatî as the seventh. The Indus and its five branches still water the primeval home of the early Hindus, but the Sarasvatî which was the most sacred of ancient rivers and was worshipped even in that remote time as a goddess, has since

ceased to flow. Antiquarians state that it has been lost in the deserts of Rajputana.

There is one somewhat curious passage in which the Rishi Visvâmitra, encumbered with the chariots and horses and other rewards bestowed on him by king Sudâs, finds a difficulty in crossing the confluence of the Beya and the Sutlej, and pours out an entire hymn (III, 33) to appease the anger of the roaring flood! We have seen that this Sudâs was a mighty conqueror and subjugated ten surrounding kings, and was the victor of numerous battles which form the theme of some spirited hymns. This mighty conqueror seems also to have been a patron of learning and religion, and liberally rewarded the sages of the houses of Visvâmitra and of Vasistha alike. As a consequence, there was jealousy between these two priestly houses to which we will allude further on.

While references to the rivers of the Punjab are thus frequent, allusions to the Ganges and the Jumna are rare. We have already translated a hymn in which both those rivers are named.

The only other passage in the Rig Veda where the Ganges is alluded to, is VI, 45, 31, where the high banks of the Ganges are the subject of a simile. The famed cattle in the pasture-fields along the banks of the Jumna are alluded to in V, 52, 17.

Thus the land of the five rivers was the earliest home of the Aryan settlers in India; and it would seem that

the settlers along the five rivers gradually formed themselves into five tribes or nations. The "five lands" (*Pancha-Kshiti*) are alluded to in I, 7, 9; I, 176, 3; VI, 46, 7, and in other places. Similarly we read of the "five cultivating tribes" (*Pancha-Krishti*) in II, 2, 10; IV, 38, 10; and other places, and we read of "five peoples" (*Pancha-Jana*) in VI, 11, 4; VI, 51, 11; VIII, 32, 22; IX, 65, 23, and other places.

It was these "five tribes" of simple, bold, and enterprising Aryans, living by agriculture and by pasture on the fertile banks of the Indus and its tributaries, who were the progenitors of the great Hindu nation, which has spread from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

We now turn to the interesting and pleasing subject of the social and domestic rules and the home-life of these five tribes of the Punjab. The first thing that strikes us here is the absence of those unhealthy rules and restrictions, those marked distinctions between man and man and between class and class, which form the most unpleasant feature of later Hindu society. We have already seen that the sturdy Hindus of the Vedic times recognized no restrictions against the use of beef, and that they refer with pride to their merchants going to the sea. We have seen too, the Rishis did not form a separate and exclusive class, and did not pass their lives away from the world in penance and contemplation. On the contrary, the Rishis were practical men

of the world, who owned large herds of cattle, cultivated fields, fought against the aboriginal enemies in times of war, and prayed to their gods for wealth and cattle, for victory in wars, and for blessings on their wives and children. Every father of a family was in fact a Rishi on a small scale, and worshipped his gods in his own house in his own humble fashion, and the women of the family joined in the worship, and helped in the performance of the ceremonies. Some among the community were of course prominent in the composition of hymns and the performance of great sacrifices; and kings and rich men sent for them on great occasions, and rewarded them handsomely. But even these great composers—these great Rishis of the Rig Veda—did not form an exclusive caste of their own. They were worldly men, mixed and married with the people, shared property with the people, fought the wars of the people, and were of the people.

One martial Rishi for instance (in V, 23, 2) prays for a son who will conquer enemies in war. Another (in VI, 20, 1) prays for wealth and corn-fields and a son who will destroy his foes. Another (in IX, 69, 8) prays for wealth and gold, for horses and cows, for profuse harvests, and excellent progeny. Another Rishi, with näive simplicity, says that his cattle are his wealth and his Indra! (VI, 28, 5.) Throughout the Rig Veda the Rishis are the people. There is not the shadow of any evidence that the Rishis or priests were a "caste"

of their own, different from the fighters and cultivators.*

This will be considered by impartial judges to be very good evidence that the caste-system did not exist. It proves a negative much more convincingly than many positive facts can be proved. In a vast collection of hymns, composed during six hundred years and more, and replete with references to the habits and manners and customs of the people,—replete with allusions to agriculture and pasture and manufacture, to wars against aborigines, to marriage and domestic rules, and the duties and position of women, to religious observances and to elementary astronomy as then known,—we have not one single passage to show that the community was cut up into hereditary "*Castes.*" Is it possible to suppose that that wonderful system existed, and yet there is no allusion to that fundamental principle of society in the ten thousand verses of the Rig Veda?

* The solitary mention of the four castes, in X, 90, 12, will not be considered an exception, or weaken our argument. The hymn itself was composed centuries after the time when the Rig Veda hymns were generally composed, as is proved by its language and its ideas. It was composed after the Rik, and the Saman and the Yajur Vedas had been separately classified (verse 9), and after the idea of the sacrifice the Supreme Being (unknown elsewhere in the Rig Veda) had found a place in the Hindu religion. It was composed, as Colebrooke states, after the rude versification of the Rig Veda had given place to the more sonorous metre of a later age. Weber, Max, Müller, Muir, and other scholars agree as to this hymn being comparatively modern.

Is it possible to find a single religious work of later times, of one-tenth the dimensions of the Rig Veda, which is silent on that system?

So far, then, we have proved a negative in the only way in which a negative can be proved. But curiously enough there is positive proof, and various passages in the Rig Veda shew that the caste-system did not exist. The very word "*varna*" which in later Sanskrit indicates caste, is used in the Rig Veda to distinguish the Aryans and non-Aryans, and nowhere indicates separate sections in the Aryan community (III 34, 9, &c.) The very word *Kshatriya* which in later Sanskrit means the military caste, is used in the Veda simply as an adjective which means strong, and is applied to gods! (VII, 64, 2; VII, 89, 1, &c.) The very word *Vipra* which in later Sanskrit means the priestly caste, is used in the Rig Veda merely as an adjective which means wise, and which is applied to gods! (VIII, 11, 6, &c.) And the very word *Brahmana* which in later Sanskrit means also the priestly caste, is used in a hundred places in the Rig Veda to imply the composers of hymns, and nothing else. (VII, 103, 8, &c.)

We would gladly multiply evidences, but our limits forbid. But we cannot help producing one piece of evidence. With that charming simplicity which is the characteristic beauty of the Rig Veda, one Rishi says pathetically of himself:—

"Behold, I am a composer of hymns, my father is

a physician, my mother grinds corn on stone. We are all engaged in different occupations. As cows wander (in various directions) in the pasture-fields (for food), so we (in various occupations), worship thee, O Soma! for wealth. Flow thou for Indra!" (IX, 112, 3.) Those who suppose that the hereditary caste-system existed in the Vedic times will have a hard nut to crack in explaining passages like the above, where father, mother, and son are described as physician, corn-grinder, and composer of hymns!

Later asserters of the caste-system have sometimes tried to crack these nuts, and with the most wonderful results! Like most other Rishis of the Rig Veda (who, we have seen before, constantly prayed for warlike sons), Visvamitra was a warrior and a composer of hymns. Later Hindus were shocked at this, and invented a beautiful Pauranik myth to explain how Visvamitra was first a Kshatriya and then became a Brahman. Needless endeavour, for Visvamitra was neither a Kshatriya nor a Brahman! He was a Vedic Rishi, *i. e.*, a warrior and priest, long before the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas, as such, were known!*

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* It gives us much pleasure to be able to cite here the authority of two scholars who have devoted their lifetime to the study of the Veda:—

"If then, with all the documents before us, we ask the question, does caste, as we find it in Manu, and at the present day, form part of the most ancient religious teaching of the Vedas? We can answer with a

As we have seen, then, every father of a family was his own priest, and his home was his temple. There is no mention of idols in the Rig Veda, none of temples or places of worship where the people were to congregate. The sacred fire was lighted in the house of every householder, and he chanted the beautiful and simple hymns which were the national property. We have a pleasing picture of women who assisted at these sacrifices, who ordered the necessary things, prepared them with pestle and mortar, extracted the Soma-juice, stirred it with their graceful figures, and strained it through a woollen strainer. In numerous places we find mention of wives joining their husbands, and performing the sacrifice together. They offer the oblations together, and hope thereby to go to heaven together (I, 131, 3; V, 43, 15, &c.) A few verses from a pious hymn on this subject will no doubt interest our readers.

"5. O ye gods! The married couple who prepare oblations together, who purify the Soma-juice and mix it with milk,

"6. May they obtain food for their eating, and come united to the sacrifice. May they never have to go in quest of food.

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decided 'No.'"—Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. II* (1867), p. 307.

"There are no castes as yet, the people are still one united whole, and bear but one name, that of *Visas.*"—Weber, *Indian Literature* (translation), p. 38.

"7. They do not make vain promises of offerings to the gods, nor withhold your praise. They worship you with the best offerings.

"8. Blest with youthful and adolescent offspring, they acquire gold, and they both attain to a mature age.

"9. The gods themselves covet the worship of such a couple who are fond of sacrifices, and offer grateful food to the gods. They embrace each other to continue their race, and they worship their gods!" (VIII, 31.)

Still more grateful to us is the picture of cultured ladies who were themselves Rishis, and composed hymns and performed sacrifices like men. For there were no unhealthy restrictions against women in those days, no attempt to keep them secluded or uneducated or debarred from their legitimate place in society. There is mention of veiled wives and brides, but no allusion to women being kept in seclusion. On the contrary, we meet them everywhere in their legitimate spheres of action, taking a share in sacrifices, and exercising their influence on society. We cherish the picture of the cultured lady Visvavara, which has been handed down to us through thousands of years,—a pious lady who composed hymns, performed sacrifices, and with simple fervency invoked the god Agni to regulate and keep within virtuous bounds the mutual relations of married couples. (V, 28, 3.) We meet with the names of other ladies also who were Rishis of the Rig Veda.

In a society so simple as that of the Vedic times, the

relations of life were determined by the needs and requirements of individuals rather than by cast-iron rules as in later days; and there was no religious obligation therefore, that every girl must be married. On the contrary, we find allusions to unmarried women who remained in the homes of their fathers, and naturally claimed and obtained a share of the paternal property. (II, 17, 7.). On the other hand, we have frequent references to careful and industrious wives who superintended the arrangements of the house, and like the dawn roused and sent every one in the house to his work in the morning (I, 124, 4), and who possessed those domestic virtues for which Hindu wives have always been noted from the earliest to the present times. Occasionally we have allusions to women who went astray (II, 29, 1); of maidens who had no brothers to watch over their morals; and wives who were faithless to their husbands. (IV, 5, 5; X, 34, 4.) And we are told of the wife of a ruined gambler who becomes the object of other men's lust. (X, 34, 4.)

It would seem that girls had some voice in the selection of their husband. Their selection was not always happy, for "many a women is attracted by the wealth of him who seeks her. But the woman who is of gentle nature and of graceful form selects, among many, her own loved one as her husband." (X, 27, 12.) We can almost imagine we see the *Svayamvara* system of later times foreshadowed in the above verse. There

can be no doubt however, that fathers always exercised a wise control in the selection of husbands for their daughters, and as at the present day, fathers gave away their girls gracefully adorned and decked with golden ornaments. (IX, 46, 2; X, 39, 14.)

The ceremony of marriage was an appropriate one, and the promises which the bridegroom and bride made to each other were suitable to the occasion. We will translate some verses from a hymn in the later portion of the Rig Veda, in which we find a pleasing picture of the ceremony. The first two among the following verses will shew that the unnatural custom of early marriage was unknown, and that girls were married after they had attained their youth.

"21. O Visvavasu! (god of marriage), arise from this place, for the marriage of this girl is over. We extol Visvavasu with hymns and prostrations. Go to some other maiden who is still in her father's house and has attained the signs of the age of marriage. She will be your share, know of her.

"22. O Visvavasu! arise from this place. We worship thee, bending in adoration. Go to an unmarried maiden whose person is well developed; make her a wife and unite her to a husband.

"23. Let the paths by which our friends go in quest of a maiden for marriage be easy and free of thorns. May Aryaman and Bhaga lead us well. O gods! may the husband and wife be well united.

"24. O maiden! the graceful sun had fastened thee with ties (of maidenhood), we release thee now of those ties. We place thee with thy husband in a place which is the home of truth and the abode of righteous actions.

"25. We release this maiden from this place (her father's house), but not from the other place (her husband's house). We unite her well with the other place. O Indra! may she be fortunate and the mother of worthy sons.

"26. May Pûshan lead you by the hand from this place. May the two Asvins lead you in a chariot. Go to your (husband's) house and be the mistress of the house. Be the mistress of all, and exercise your authority over all in that house.

"27. Let children be born unto thee, and blessings attend thee here. Perform the duties of thy household with care. Unite thy person with the person of this thy husband; exercise thy authority in this thy house until old age.

"40. First Soma accepts thee; then Gandharva accepts thee; Agni is thy third lord; the son of man is the fourth to accept thee.*

"41. Soma bestowed this maiden to Gandharva, Gandharva gave her to Agni, Agni has given her to me with wealth and progeny.

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* This and the following verse would shew that the bride was offered to the three gods before she was united to the bridegroom.

"42. O bridegroom and bride! Do ye remain here together; do not be separated. Enjoy food of various kinds; remain in your own home, and enjoy happiness in company of your children and grandchildren.

"43. (The bride and bridegroom say), May Prajapati bestow on us children; may Aryaman keep us united till old age. (Address to the bride), O bride! Enter with auspicious signs the home of thy husband. Do good to our male servants and our female servants, and to our cattle.

"44. Be thy eyes free from anger; minister to the happiness of thy husband; do good to our cattle. May thy mind be cheerful; and may thy beauty be bright. Be the mother of heroic sons, and be devoted to the gods. Do good to our male servants and our female servants, and to our cattle.

"45. O Indra! make this woman fortunate and the mother of worthy sons. Let ten sons be born of her, so that there may be eleven men (in the family) with the husband.

"46. (Address to the bride), May thou have influence over thy father-in-law and over thy mother-in-law, and be as a queen over thy sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

"47. (The bridegroom and bride say), May all the gods unite our hearts; may Matarisvan and Dhatri and the goddess of speech unite us together." (X, 85.)

Our extract has been somewhat lengthy, but our readers will not regret it. The extract shews at once the

appropriate nature of the ceremony that was performed, and the position which the young bride occupied in the home and the affections of her lord.

Polygamy was allowed among kings and the rich people in Vedic times, as it was allowed in olden times in all countries and among all nations. Domestic dissensions were the natural result in such instances, and we have hymns in the latter part of the Rig Veda, in which wives curse their fellow-wives. (X, 145 ; X, 159.) The evil seems, however, to have grown in the latter part of the Vedic age, for there are scarcely any allusions to it in the earlier hymns.

We need scarcely allude to hymns suited to the occasions of conception and childbirth. (X, 183 ; X, 184 ; X, 162; V, 78, 7 to 9.) These hymns also belong to the last portion of the Vedic age when superstition and priestly influence were gaining on the people, and ceremonies multiplied. We must allude, however, to two curious verses which seem to lay down the law of inheritance, and is therefore of peculiar interest. We give a translation below:

"1. The father who has no son honours his son-in-law, capable of begetting sons, and goes (*i. e.*, leaves his property) to the son of his daughter. The (sonless) father trusts in his daughter's offspring, and lives content.

"2. A son does not give any of his father's property to a sister. He gives her away to be the wife of a

husband. If a father and mother beget both son and daughter, then one (*i. e.*, son) engages himself in the acts and duties of his father, while the other (daughter) receives honour." (III, 31.)

This is the first germ of the Hindu law of inheritance, which makes the son, and not the daughter, the inheritor of his father's property and religious duties, and which allows the property to go to the daughter's son only in the absence of male issue. We think we discover the first germs of the Hindu law of adoption too in such passages as the following:—

"As a man who is not indebted gets much wealth, so we too shall get the treasure that endures (*i. e.*, a son). O Agni! let us not have son begotten of another. Do not follow the ways of the ignorant.

"A son begotten of another may yield us happiness, but can never be regarded or accepted as one's own. And verily he ultimately goes back to his own place. Therefore, may a son be newly born unto us who will bring us food and destroy our foes." (VII, 4, 7, & 8.)

As we have spoken in this chapter of marriage and inheritance, it is necessary to complete our account of social and domestic customs to speak of the funeral ceremony also. Yama in the Rig Veda is not the god of hell, but the god of the heaven of the righteous, the god who rewards the virtuous man after his death, in a happy land. His two dogs however are objects to be avoided or propitiated. The following verses are taken

from a hymn composed, it is needless to say, not in the earlier but in the latest period of the Vedic age when ceremonies multiplied :

"7. O thou deceased ! proceed to the same place where our forefathers have gone, by the same path which thy followed. The two kings, Yama and Varuna, are pleased with the offerings ; go and see them.

"8. Go to that happy heaven and mix with the early forefathers. Mix with Yama and with the fruits of thy virtuous deeds. Leave sin behind, enter thy home.

"9. O ye ghosts ! leave this place, go away, move away. For the forefathers have prepared a place for the deceased. That place is beautified with day, with sparkling waters and with light ; Yama assigns this place to the dead.

"10. O thou deceased ! these two dogs have four eyes each, and a strange colour. Go past them quickly. Then proceed by the beautiful path to those wise forefathers, who spend their time in joy and happiness with Yama." (X, 14.)

The above passages give us an idea of the belief in future happiness as it was developed in the latest period of the Vedic era.

There are some passages which shew that burial, without cremation, was practised in those times.

"10. O thou deceased ! go to the extended earth who is as a mother ; she is extensive and beautiful. Her touch be soft as that of wool or of a female.

You have performed sacrifices, let her save thee from unrighteousness.

"11. O earth! rise up above him, do not give him pain. Give him good things, give him consolation. As a mother covers her child with the hem of her cloth, so cover the deceased.

"12. Let the earth, raised on him as a mound, lie light. Let a thousand particles of dust rest on him. Let them be to him as a house filled with butter, let them form a shelter to him." (X, 18.)

That cremation was also practised in the Vedic times will be shewn by the following extract:—

"O fire! do not reduce this deceased into ashes; do not give him pain. Do not mangle his skin or his person. O fire! send him to the home of our fathers as soon as his body is burnt in thy heat." (X, 16, 1.)

It remains only to allude to one more remarkable verse of the 18th hymn which distinctly sanctions the marriage of widows.

"Rise up, woman, thou art lying by one whose life is gone, come to the world of the living, away from thy husband, and become the wife of him who holds thy hand, and is willing to marry thee." (X, 18, 8.)

The translation is based on Sâyana's rendering of the passage in the *Taittiriya Âranyaka*, and there can be no doubt as to its correctness, because the word Didhishu used in the passage has only one meaning in the Sanskrit language, *viz.*, the second husband of a woman.

We quote here with pleasure the following remarks with which Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra winds up a paper on Funeral Ceremony in Ancient India. "That the re-marriage of widows in Vedic times was a national custom, can be established by a variety of proofs and arguments; the very fact of the Sanskrit language having, from ancient times, such words as Didhishu, 'a man that has married a widow,' Parapûrvâ, 'a woman that has taken a second husband,' Paunarbhava, 'a son of a woman by her second husband,' are enough to establish it."

It is with pain and regret that we will in conclusion refer to another passage also belonging to this remarkable hymn, and which is perfectly harmless in the Rig Veda itself, but which was altered and mistranslated in later times to sanction the barbarous custom of *Suttee*, or the burning of the widow on the pyre of her husband. That most cruel of all human institutions finds no sanction in the Rig Veda. There is a perfectly harmless passage (X, 18, 7,) which refers to a procession of women at a funeral ceremony. The passage may be thus translated:—

"May these women not suffer the pangs of widowhood. May they who have good and desirable husbands, enter their houses with collyrium and butter. Let these women, without shedding tears, and without any sorrow, first proceed to the house, wearing valuable ornaments."

There is not a word in the above relating to the burning of widows. But a word in it *Agre* was altered into *Agne*, and the text was then mistranslated and misapplied in Bengal to justify the detestable custom of widow-burning. In the words of Professor Max Müller, "This is, perhaps, the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood. Here have thousands of lives been sacrificed and a fanatical rebellion been threatened on the authority of a passage which was mangled, mistranslated and misapplied." The censure is strong, but is deserved; it does not matter whether the alteration in the text and the mistranslation were made in recent times or a few hundred years ago.

CHAPTER VI.

VEDIC RELIGION.

AN account of the social life and the civilization of the early Hindus will not be complete without some account of their religion. The religion of the Rig Veda is well known. It is pre-eminently the worship of Nature in its most imposing and sublime aspects. The sky which bends over all, the beautiful and blushing dawn which like a busy housewife wakes men from slumber and sends them to their work, the gorgeous tropical sun which vivifies the earth, the air which pervades the world, the fire which cheers and enlightens us, and the violent storms which in India strike terror into the boldest, but usher into those copious rains which fill the land with plenty,—these were the gods whom the early Hindus loved to extol and to worship. And often when an ancient Rishi sang the praises of any of the gods with devotion and fervour, he forgot that there was any other god besides, and his sublime hymn has the character and the sublimity of a prayer to the one God of the universe. This is what makes many scholars often pause and hesitate before they give the Vedic religion any other name than Monotheism. Indeed the Rishis themselves often rose higher than the

level of their primitive Nature-worship, and boldly declared that the different gods were but different manifestations or different names of the One Primal Cause. Towards the end of the Rig Veda, we often come across hymns sung to the One Being. The landmarks between Nature-worship and Monotheism have been passed, and the great Rishis of the Rig Veda have passed from Nature up to Nature's God.

This is the characteristic beauty of the Rig Veda as compared with other religious works of other nations. We do not find in the Veda any well defined system of religion or any one particular stage of thought or civilization. On the contrary we watch with interest how the human mind *travels*, travels from an almost childlike but sincere invocation of the rising sun or the beneficent sky to the sublimer idea that neither the sun nor the sky is the Deity,—that the Deity is greater and higher than these, and has created these objects. We know of no other work in any language which possesses such interest for the philosophic enquirer into the progress of the human mind, or which shows, as the Rig Veda does show, how human intelligence travels step by step, higher and higher, until from the created objects it grasps the sublime idea of the Creator.

The sky was naturally the most prominent object of worship, and as the sky assumes various aspects, various names were given to it, and the conception of various deities was formed. The oldest probably is Dyu

(literally the shining), the Zeus of the Greeks, the first syllable of Jupiter among the Romans, the Tiu of the Saxons, and the Zio of the Germans. This common name among many Aryan races indicates that the deity was worshipped by the ancestors of all these nations in their first primeval abode in Asia.

But while Zeus and Jupiter maintained their supremacy among the gods of Greece and Rome, in India he soon lost his place, and the sky *in one of its peculiar functions* soon usurped his place. For in India the annual rise of rivers, the fertility of land, and the luxuriance of crops depend, not on the sky which shines above us, but on the *sky that rains*, and *Indra*, which means the rain-giver, soon became the first among the Vedic gods.

Another ancient name of the sky was Varuna, the Uranus of the Greeks. The word signifies to cover, and Varuna was the sky which covered the earth, probably the sky without light, the nightly sky. For we find another name for the bright sky of day, *viz.*, Mitra, the Mithra of the Zendavesta. Sanskrit commentators naturally explain Varuna as night and Mitra as day, and the Iranians worshipped the sun under the name of Mithra, and gave the name of Varuna to a happy region, if not the sky.

These facts show that the idea and name of Varuna as a god of sky was known to the ancestors of Aryan nations before those nations separated and migrated to Greece, to Persia, and to India. Indeed the eminent

German scholar Dr. Roth and many others are of opinion that before the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians separated, Varuna was the highest and holiest of the gods of their common ancestors, and represented the spiritual side of their religion. After the separation had taken place, this deity of righteousness was, it is alleged, translated in Iran into Ahura Mazd, the Supreme Deity. And although in India Varuna yielded the foremost place among gods to the young and vigorous rain-giver Indra, still he never became divested of that sanctity and holiness which entered into his first conception, and the holiest hymns of the Rig Veda are his, not Indra's. Whatever be the value of these opinions, the fact of Varuna's pre-eminent sanctity in the Rig Veda cannot be denied, and we will give a few short translations from the hymns to Varuna to illustrate this:

"6. O Varuna! the birds that fly have not attained thy power, or thy vigour; the water which flows ceaselessly and the moving wind do not surpass thy speed.

"7. King Varuna of unsullied power remains in the firmament, and holds on high the rays of light. Those rays descend downwards, but proceed from above. May they sustain our existence.

"8. King Varuna has spread out the path for the course of the sun. He has made the path for the sun to traverse in pathless space. May he rebuke our enemies who pierce our hearts.

"9. O King Varuna! a hundred and a thousand medicinal drugs are thine; may thy beneficence be vast and deep. Keep unrighteousness away from us, deliver us from the sins we have committed.

"10. Yonder stars * which are placed on high, and are seen by night,—where do they go by day? The acts of Varuṇa are irresistible; the moon shines brightly by his mandate." (I, 24.)

"3. O Varuna! with an anxious heart I ask thee about my sins. I have gone to learned men to make inquiry; the sages have all said to me:—'Varuna is displeased with thee.'

"4. O Varuna! what have I done that thou wishest to destroy thy friend, thy worshipper? O thou of irresistible power, declare it to me, so that I may quickly bend in adoration, and come unto thee.

"5. O Varuna! deliver us from the sins of our fathers. Deliver us from the sins committed in our

* The word used with text is Riksha, which may either mean stars generally, or the stars of the constellation Great Bear. The root *rich* means to shine, whence in course of time the word Riksha came to have two meanings—the shining stars of a particular constellation, and an animal with bright eyes and shining glossy hair. By a natural confusion of ideas, therefore, the constellation itself ultimately came to be called the Bear. The question is discussed with remarkable eloquence and learning by Max Müller in his Science of Language, and he explains that "the surprise with which many a thoughtful observer has looked at these seven bright stars, wondering why they were ever called the Bear, is removed by reference to the early annals of human speech."

persons. O royal Varuna! deliver Vasishtha, like a calf from its tether, like a thief who has feasted on a stolen animal.

"6. O Varuna! all this sin is not wilfully committed by us. Error or wine, anger or dice, or even thoughtlessness has begotten sin. Even an elder brother leads his younger astray, sin is begotten even in our dreams.

"7. Freed from sin, I will faithfully serve as a slave, the Varuna who fulfils our wishes and supports us. We are ignorant, may the Ârya god bestow on us knowledge. May the wise deity accept our prayer and bestow on us wealth." (VII, 86.)

"1. O King Varuna! may I never go to the earthen home. O thou of great power! have mercy, have mercy.

"2. O Varuna with thy weapons! I come trembling even like a cloud driven by the wind. O thou of great power! have mercy, have mercy.

"3. O rich and pure Varuna! I have been driven against righteous acts through weakness. O thou of great power! have mercy, have mercy.

"4. Your worshippers hath thirsted even when living in water. O thou of great power! have mercy, have mercy.

"5. O Varuna! we are mortals. In whatever way we have sinned against gods, in whatever manner we have through ignorance neglected thy work—O! do not destroy us for these sins." (VII, 89.)

These and many other hymns show that Varuna was never divested in India of that idea of holiness which is said to have entered into his original conception. But nevertheless, Varuna like Dyu was supplanted in power by the younger Indra, a god who is peculiarly Indian, and is unknown to other Aryan nations.

One of the most famous legends about Indra, the most famous legend probably in the Aryan world, is about the production of rain. The dark heavy clouds to which man looks up with wistful eyes, but which often disappoint him in seasons of drought, are called by the ancient name of Vritra.

Vritra is supposed to confine the waters, and will not let them descend until the sky-god or rain-god Indra strikes the monster with his thunderbolt. The captive waters then descend in copious showers, rivers rise almost instantaneously, and gods and men rejoice over the changed face of nature. Many are the spirited hymns in the Rig Veda in which this combat is narrated with much glee and rejoicing. The storm-gods, Maruts, help Indra in the combat, the sky and earth tremble at the noise, Vritra long wages an unequal combat, and then falls and dies,—the drought is over, and rains begin.

We have said that Indra is a peculiarly Indian name and is unknown to other Aryan nations. But the legend given above and the name of Vritra appear in various shapes among various Aryan nations. Vritraghna, or the

slayer of Vritra, is worshipped in the Zendavesta as Verethraghna, and we also find in the same work an account of the destruction of Ahi, which in the Veda is another name for Vritra. Threyetana is the slayer of Ahi, and the genius of the great French scholar Burnouf has recognized this identical Threyetana in the Ferudin of Ferdusi's Shah Nama,—translated from mythology to history after thousands of years! It will probably surprise modern readers more to know that scholars have traced this Ahi of the Veda and the Zendavesta in the dragon Echis and Echidna of Greek mythology; that in the dog Orthros, the offspring of Echidna, they have recognized our old friend Vritra or the rain-cloud, and Hercules therefore, the slayer of Orthros, is the counterpart of Threyetana of Zendavesta, and of Indra of the Rig Veda!

It would be easy to multiply such legends, but our limits forbid such a course. We will therefore only make a passing mention of one more legend, *viz.*, that about the recovery of light by Indra after the darkness of night. The rays of light are compared to cattle which have been stolen away by the powers of darkness, and Indra (the sky) seeks for them in vain. He sends *Saramâ*, *i.e.*, the dawn, after them, and Saramâ finds out the *Bilu*, or fortress, where the *Panis*, or powers of darkness, have concealed the cattle. The Panis try to tempt Saramâ, but in vain. Saramâ comes back to Indra, and Indra marches with his forces, destroys

the fort and recovers the cattle; darkness is gone, and it is day! This is a well-known Vedic legend, and there are constant allusions to it in the hymns to Indra.

Professor Max Müller maintains that the story of the siege of Troy is a development of this simple Vedic myth, and is "but a repetition of the daily siege of the East by the Solar powers that every evening are robbed of their brightest treasures in the west." Ilium according to the Professor is *Bilu*, the cave or the fortress of the Rig Veda. Paris is the *Panis* of the Veda who tempt, and Helena is the Vedic *Saramâ* who resists the temptation in the Veda, but succumbs to it in Greek mythology.

Historical evidence of an actual siege of Troy need not necessarily disprove this theory, for nothing is more common in ancient history than the blending of mythical names and incidents with historical events. Arjuna the hero of a historical Kuru Panchâla war is a myth, and is a name of the rain-god Indra; and it is not impossible that the poet who sang of a historical siege of Troy blended with it a solar myth with its names and incidents. We will now make short extracts from the Rig Veda illustrating these two legends:—

"1. We sing the heroic deeds which were performed by Indra the thunderer. He destroyed Ahi (cloud) and caused rains to descend, and opened out the paths for the mountain streams to roll.

"2. Indra slayed Ahi (cloud) resting on the mountains, Twashtri had made the far-reaching thunderbolt for him. Water in torrents flowed towards the sea, as cows run eagerly towards their calves.

"3. Impetuous as a bull, Indra quaffed the Soma-juice; he drank the Soma libations offered in the three sacrifices. He then took the thunderbolt, and thereby slayed the eldest of the Ahis.

"4. When you killed the eldest of the Ahis, you destroyed the contrivances of the artful contrivers. You cleared the sun and the morning and the sky, and left no enemies (clouds) behind.

"5. Indra with his all destructive thunderbolt slayed the darkling Vritra (cloud), and lopped his limbs. Ahi now lies touching the earth like the trunk of a tree felled by the axe.

"6. The proud Vritra thought that he had no equal, and defined the destroyer and conqueror Indra to combat. But he did not escape destruction, and Indra's foe fell, crushing the rivers in his fall.

"8. Glad waters are bounding over the prostrate body as rivers flow over fallen banks. Vritra when alive had withheld the water by his power, Ahi now lies prostrate under that water.

"10. The prostrate body lies concealed and nameless under ceaseless and restless waters, and the waters flow above. Indra's foe sleeps the long sleep." (I, 32.)

The above is one of the hymns relating to the legend of Vritra. We now turn to a hymn relating to the legend of Saramâ.

1. The *Panis* say:—"O Saramâ! why hast thou come here? It is a long distance. He who looks back cannot come this way. What have we with us for which thou hast come? How long hast thou travelled? How didst thou cross the Rasâ?

2. *Saramâ* replies:—"I come as the messenger of Indra. O Panis! it is my object to recover the abundant cattle which you have hidden. The water has helped me, the water felt a fear at my crossing, and thus I crossed the Rasâ.

3. The *Panis.*—"What is that Indra like, whose messenger thou art, and hast come from a long distance? How does he look? (To one another:) Let her come, we will own her as a friend. Let her take and own our cows.

4. *Saramâ.*—"I do not see any one who can conquer the Indra whose messenger I am, and have come from a long distance. It is he who conquers everybody. The deep rivers cannot restrain his course. O Panis! you will surely be slain by Indra and will lie down.

5. *Panis.*—"O beautiful Saramâ! thou hast come from the farthest ends of the sky, we will give thee without any dispute these cows as thou desirest. Who else would have given the cattle without a dispute. We have many sharp weapons with us.

9. *Panis.*—"O Saramâ! thou hast come here because the god threatened thee and sent thee here. We will accept thee as a sister, do not return. O beautiful Saramâ! we will give thee a share of this cattle.

10. *Saramâ.*—"I do not comprehend your words about brothers and sisters. Indra and the powerful sons of the Angiras know all. They sent me here to guard the cattle until recovery. I have come here under their shelter. O Panis! run away far far from here." (X, 108.)

It will be seen from the few extracts we have made that the hymns to Indra are characterized by force and vigour, as those to Varuna are marked with a feeling of righteousness. Indra is in fact the most vigorous of Vedic gods, fond of Soma wine, delighting in war, leading his comrades the Maruts to fight against drought, leading hosts of Aryans against the black aborigines, and helping them to carve out for themselves with their strong right arm the most fertile spots along the five rivers of the Punjab. The sky and earth gave him birth as a cudgel for the enemies. (III, 49, 1.) The young and vigorous infant went to his mother Aditi for food, and saw Soma wine on her breast; he drank Soma before he drank from his mother's breast. (III, 48, 2 & 3.) And the great drinker and fighter often hesitates between the temptation of Soma libations at sacrifices, and the temptation of his home where a beautiful wife awaits him. (III, 53, 4 to 6.)

We have so long spoken of Dyu and Varuna and Mitra and Indra as the principal sky-gods of the Rig Veda. All these gods may however also be considered as gods of light, as the idea of the bright light of sky enters into the conception of all these deities, even of Varuna in some passages. We will now however speak of some deities who have more distinctly a solar character, and some of whom are grouped together under the common name of Âdityas or sons of Aditi, and this brings us to the most remarkable name that occurs in the Rig Veda mythology. Unlike Indra, which comes from *Ind* to rain, and Dyu which comes from *Dyu* to shine, the word Aditi involves a more complicated idea. Aditi means the undivided, the unlimited, the eternal. It is in reality, as has been stated, the earliest name invented by man to express the Infinite,—the visible infinite, the endless expanse, beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky. The fact that such an idea should enter into the conception of a deity argues a remarkable advance in the culture and thought of the early Hindus. The word has no counterpart among the names of the deities of other ancient Aryan nations, and must have been coined in India after the Indo-Aryan section had settled in this country. It means according to the eminent German scholar Dr. Roth, the eternal and inviolable principle, the celestial light.

There is much confusion in the Rig Veda as to who

are the Âdityas,—the sons of this celestial light. In II, 27, Aryaman and Bhaga and Daksha and Ansa are named beside Varuna and Mitra of whom we have spoken before. In IX, 114, and in X, 72, the Âdityas are said to be seven in number, but are not named. We have seen before that Indra is called a son of Aditi. Savitri, the sun, is often described as an Âditya, and so are Pûshan and Vishnu, who are also different names of the sun. We will therefore leave alone the word Âditya and make a few remarks on the different names by which the sun in its different aspects was worshipped.

Sûrya and Savitri are the most common names of the sun in the Rig Veda, the former word answering to the Greek Helios, the Latin Sol, the Tuton Tyr, and the Iranian Khorshed. Commentators draw a distinction between Savitri the rising or the unrisen sun, and Sûrya the bright sun of day. The golden rays of the sun were naturally compared with arms until a story found its place in the Hindu mythology that Savitri lost his arm at a sacrifice, and it was replaced by a golden arm. The same story reappears in a different form in German mythology, in which the sun-god Tyr placed his hand in the mouth of a tiger and lost it!

The only extract we will make from the hymns to the sun will be that most celebrated of all the verses in the Rig Veda, the Gâyatri, or the morning hymn of the later Brâhmans. But the Rig Veda recognized no Brâhmans, the caste system was not formed then, and

the sublime hymn was the *national* property of the early Hindus who dwelt on the banks of the Indus. We give the original verse and Dr. Wilson's translation :

"*Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhîmahi*
"*Dhiyo yo nah prachodayât.*"

"We meditate on the desirable light of the divine Savitri who influences our pious rites." (III, 62, 10.)

Pûshan is the sun as viewed by shepherds in their wanderings in quest of fresh pasture lands. He travels in a chariot yoked with goats, guides men and cattle in their travels and migrations, and knows and protects the flocks. The hymns to Pûshan therefore often breathe a simplicity which is truly pastoral. A few extracts from such hymns have been given before.

Vishnu has obtained such a prominent place as the Supreme Deity in later Hinduism that there is a natural reluctance among orthodox modern Hindus to accept him in his Vedic character as a mere sun-god. Yet such he is in the Rig Veda, and he is quite an inferior deity in the Vedic pantheon, far below Indra or Varuna, Savitri or Agni. It was not till the days of the Satapatha Brâhmana that Vishnu obtained some prominence among gods ; and it was not till the Paurânik times, long after the Christian Era, that Vishnu was considered as a Supreme Deity. In the Veda Vishnu is said to traverse space in three steps, *viz.*, the sun at rising, at zenith and at setting. In the Purânas this simple metaphor has led to a long story.

Fire was an object of worship among all ancient nations, and in India sacrificial fire received the highest regard. As no sacrifice could be performed without fire, Agni or fire was called the invoker of the gods. He was called Yavishtha, or the "youngest" among the gods, because he was kindled anew at each time of sacrifice by the friction of *arani*, or the sacrificial wood. For this reason, he also received the name of Pramantha, *i.e.*, produced by friction.*

So high was the esteem in which fire was held among the gods of the Rig Veda, that when the ancient commentator Yâska, tried to reduce the number of the Vedic gods into three, he named Agni or fire as the god of the earth, Indra or Vâyu as the god of the firmament, and the Sun as the god of the sky.

But Agni is not only terrestrial fire in the Rig Veda; he is also the fire of the lightning and the sun, and his abode was the invisible heaven. The Bhrigus discovered him there, Mâtarisvan brought him down, and

* If we may believe Mr. Cox, many of the Greek and Latin deities owe their name to the Sanscrit names of Fire. "In this name, Yavishtha, which is never given to any other Vedic god, we may recognize the Hellenic Hephaistos. *Note.*—Thus with the exception of Agni, all the names of the Fire and the Fire-gods were carried away by the Western Aryans; and we have Prometheus answering to Pramantha, Phoronus to Bharanyu, and the Latin Vulcanus to the Sanscrit, Ulka."—*Cox's Mythology of Aryan Nations.*

"Agni is the god of fire; the Ignis of the Latins, the Ogni of the Sclavonians."—*Muir's Sanscrit Texts.*

Atharvan and Angiras, the first sacrificers, first installed him in this world as the protector of men.

Vayu, or the air, has received less consideration from the Vedic bards, and there are but few hymns assigned to him. But the Maruts or the storm-gods are oftener invoked, as we have seen before, probably because they inspired more terror, and they are considered as the companions of Indra in obtaining rain from the reluctant clouds! The earth trembles as they move in their deer-yoked chariots, and men see the flashing of their arms or the sparkle of their ornaments, the lightning. But they are benevolent all the same, and they milk from the udder of their mother Prisni (cloud) copious showers for the benefit of man. Rudra, a fierce deity, is the father of the Maruts, loud-sounding as his name signifies, and a form of fire as the commentators Yâska and Sâyana explain. There can be no doubt therefore as to the correctness of Dr. Roth's conclusion, that the original meaning of this loud-sounding fire, this father of storms, is thunder. Nevertheless Rudra, though awful, is not a malevolent deity, he is beneficent and helpful and knows many remedies.

Like Vishnu, Rudra is a third rate deity in the Rig Veda, and only a few hymns are assigned to him. But like Vishnu, Rudra has attained prominence in later times, and is one of the Hindu Trinity of the Paurânik religion, a portion of the Supreme Deity. In some of the Upanishads we find the names Kâlî, Karâlî, &c.,

used as the names of different kinds of flame, and in the White Yajus Sanhita, we find Ambika spoken of as the sister of Rudra. But when Rudra assumed a more distinct individuality in the Puranas, all these names were construed as the different names of his wife! We have only to add that none of these goddesses, nor Lakshmi, the wife of Pauranik Vishnu, is so much as mentioned even by name in the Rig Veda.

Another god who has also changed his character in the Puranas (and very much for the worse!) is Yama, the king of the dead. In the Purânas he is called the child of the Sun, and there are some reasons (which Professor Max Müller explains with his usual eloquence), for supposing that the original conception of Yama in the Rig Veda is the conception of the departing sun. The sun sets and disappears, just as a man's life ends: and the imagination of a simple race would easily conjure up an after world, where that departed deity would preside over departed spirits.

According to the Rig Veda, Vivasvat the sky is the father, and Saranyu the dawn is the mother of Yama and his sister Yami.

Who can be the offspring of the sky and the dawn but the sun or the day? It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the twins Yama and Yami are, as Professor Max Müller explains, day and night in their original conception. There is a curious passage in the Rig Veda

in which the amorous sister Yami desires to embrace her brother as her husband, but the brother declines such union as unholy (X, 10). It is not difficult to fathom the import of this conversation:—Day and Night, though eternally pursuing each other, can never be united.

But whatever the original conception of Yama may be, there is no doubt that even in the Rig Veda itself, that deity has attained a distinct individuality, and he is the king of the departed. So far his Vedic character agrees with his Pauranik character, but here the parallel ends. In the Veda, he is the beneficent king of the happy world where the virtuous live and enjoy themselves in after-life. Clothed in a glorious body, they sit by the side of Yama in the realms of light and sparkling waters, they enjoy endless felicity there, and are adored here below under the name of Pitris or fathers. How different is the character which Yama bears in the Puranas as the cruel and dread Punisher of the guilty!

The following extract embodies the Vedic idea of future happiness. We will only remark here, that allusions to the future world are brief and rare in the earlier portions of the Veda, and that there is no description of future life, like the one we quote below except in the very latest hymns.

"1. Worship Yama the son of Vivasvat with offerings. All men go to him. He takes men of virtuous

deeds to the realm of happiness. He clears the way for many.

"2. Yama first discovered the path for us. That path will not be destroyed again. All living beings will, according to their acts, follow by the path by which our forefathers have gone." (X, 14.)

We may also quote here another passage from a hymn to Soma, which contains a fuller allusion to the future world. Soma it is well known was the juice of a plant made into wine, and used as libation in sacrifices. Soma soon attained the rank of a deity and all the hymns of the ninth mandala are dedicated to him.

"7. O flowing Soma! take me to that immortal and imperishable abode where light dwells eternal, and which is in heaven. Flow, Soma! for Indra.

"8. Take me where Yama is king, where there are the gates of heaven, and where mighty rivers flow. Take me there and make me immortal. Flow, Soma! for Indra.

"9. Take me where there is the third heaven, where there is the third realm of light above the sky, and where one can wander at his will. Take me there and make me immortal. Flow, Soma! for Indra.

"10. Take me where every desire is satiated, where Pradhma has his abode, where there is food and contentment. Take me there and make me immortal. Flow, Soma! for Indra.

"11. Take me where there are pleasures and joys and delights, where every desire of the anxious heart is satiated. Take me there, and make me immortal. Flow, Soma! for Indra." (IX, 113.)

We have spoken above of Yama and Yami as the twin children of Vivasvat the sky, by Saranyu the dawn. It is remarkable that the same parents begot another twin offspring, the two Asvins. There can be little doubt that they too, like Yama and Yami, were in their original conception the day and the night, or the dawn and the evening.

But whatever the original conception of the Asvins may be, they appear in the Rig Veda as great physicians, healers of the sick and the wounded, and tending many persons with kindness. Long lists of the kind acts of the two Asvins are given in several hymns, and the same cures are spoken of over and over. On their three-wheeled chariot, they make the circuit of the world day by day, and succour men in their distress.

Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati is the lord of hymns, Brahman in the Rig Veda meaning hymn. The conception of this deity arose in much the same way as the conception of the deities Fire and Soma. As there is power in the flame and the libation of the sacrifice, so there is power in the prayer uttered; and this power of prayer is personified in the Vedic god Brahmanaspati.

He is quite a third rate god in the Rig Veda, but has a great future. For in course of centuries, the thinkers of the Upanishads conceived of a Supreme Universal Being, and gave him the Vedic name Brahmâ. Then, when Buddhism flourished in the land, the Buddhists themselves tolerated Brahma as a gentle and beneficent spirit in their pantheon. And when at last Paurânik Hinduism supplanted Buddhism in India, the Pauranik thinkers gave the name of Brahmâ to the Supreme Creator of the Universe. Thus by looking into our national records of the farthest antiquity, we trace the simple beginnings of that gorgeous Paurânik mythology which has for over a thousand years swayed the opinions and conduct of hundreds of millions of our countrymen and countrywomen. It is like tracing one of our great Indian rivers which spreads for miles together at its mouth, to its very source, where a narrow but pure and crystal streamlet issues from the eternal mountains! Ideas develope in the course of time, just as rivers expand and receive fresh supplies of water in their course, until they lose all their primitive character, although still bearing the same names. And we can no more recognize the simple Vedic character of Brahma the prayer, of Vishnu the sun, and of Rudra the thunder, in the Supreme Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the Puranas, than we can recognize the crystal streamlet at Hardwar in the sea-

like expanse of the Ganges where it mingles with the Bay of Bengal.

These are the important gods of the Rig Veda. Of the goddesses there are only two who have any marked individuality, *viz.*, Ushas, the dawn, and Sarasvati, the goddess of the river of that name, and afterwards the goddess of speech.

There is no lovelier conception in the Rig Veda than that of the dawn. There are no hymns in the Veda more truly poetical than those dedicated to her, and nothing more charming is to be found in the lyrical poetry of any ancient nation. We can make room here for only a few extracts:

"20. What mortal knoweth thee, O immortal Ushas fond of our praise! Whom, O mighty one, dost thou favour?

"21. Far-extending, many-tinted, brilliant Ushas! we know not thy abode, whether it be nigh or remote.

"22. Daughter of the sky! accept these offerings, and perpetuate our welfare." (I, 30.)

"7. Auspicious Ushas has harnessed her chariots from afar, before the rising of the sun! She comes in radiance and glory on us in her hundred chariots." (I, 48.)

"7. She, the young, the white-robed daughter of the sky, the mistress of all earthly treasure, dawns upon us, dissipating darkness! Auspicious Ushas! shine upon us to-day in this spot.

"8. Following the path of mornings that have passed, to be followed by endless mornings to come, bright Ushas dispels darkness, and awakens to life all beings, unconscious like the dead in sleep.

"10. How long have the Dawns risen? How long will the Dawns arise? The present morning pursues those that are gone, future mornings will pursue this resplendent Ushas.

"11. Mortals who behold the pristine Ushas have passed away; we behold her now; and men will come after us who will behold Ushas in the future." (I, 113.)

"4. Ahana gently proceeds to every house; she comes ever diffusing light, and blesses us and accepts our offerings.

"11. Radiant as a bride decorated by her mother, thou displayest thy person to the view. Auspicious Ushas! remove the investing darkness; no other dawns but thee will disperse it." (I, 123.)

The Dawn was known by various names, and most of these names and the legends connected with them were brought by the Hindus from their original abode, since we find phonetical equivalents of these names, and a repetition of some of the legends too, in Greek mythology. Ushas is the Eos of the Greeks and the Aurora of the Latins. Arjuni (the white one) is the Greek Argynoris, Brisaya is Briscis, Dahana is Daphne, Sarama is phonetically equivalent to the Greek Helena, and Saranyu, the mother of Yama and of the Asvins,

is the Greek Erinys, and Ahana is the renowned goddess Athena.

We have already alluded to the legend of Saranyu running away from her husband Vivasvat, and then giving birth to the twin Asvins. We find the same legend among the Greeks who believed in Erinys Demeter running away in the same manner, and giving birth to Areion and Despoina. The idea in both cases is the same, it is the dawn disappearing as the day advances. The same idea has given rise to another beautiful Greek legend whose origin, too, we trace in the Rig Veda. In many passages (I, 115, 2, for instance,) we find allusions of the sun pursuing the dawn as a man pursues a woman. The Greek Apollo in the same way pursues the Greek Daphne, until she is metamorphosed, *i.e.*, the dawn disappears!

Sarasvati, as her name signifies, is the goddess of the river of that name, which was considered holy because of the religious rites performed on its banks and the sacred hymns uttered there. By a natural development of ideas, she was considered the goddess of those hymns, or in other words the goddess of speech, in which character she is worshipped now. She is the only Vedic goddess whose worship continues in India to the modern day; all her modern companions, Durgâ, Kali, Lakshmi, and others, are creations of a later day.

Such is the nature-worship of the Rig Veda; such were the gods and goddesses whom our forefathers

worshipped near four thousand years ago on the banks of the Indus. The conception of the nature-gods and the simple and manly fervency with which they were adored, argue the simplicity and vigour of a manly conquering race, as well as the culture and thoughtfulness of a people who had already made a considerable progress in civilization. Again, the very conception of the Vedic gods argues an elevated sentiment, a high tone of morality in the men who conceived such deities. As M. Barth justly observes, the Vedic gods are masters close at hand, and require a due performance of duty by man. "He must be sincere towards them, for they cannot be deceived. Nay he knows that they in turn do not deceive, and that they have a right to require his affection and confidence as a friend, a brother, a father. * * How could it be permitted to men to be bad when the gods are good, to be unjust while they are just, to be deceitful when they never deceive. It is certainly a remarkable feature of the hymns that they acknowledge no wicked divinities, and no mean and harmful practices. * * We must acknowledge then that the hymns give evidence of an exalted and comprehensive morality, and that in striving to be 'without reproach before Aditi and the Adityas,' the Vedic minstrels feel the weight of other duties besides those of multiplying offerings to the gods."*

* *The Religions of India.* (Translation). P. 32, *et seq.*

There are no indications in the Rig Veda of any "temples reared by mortal hands" and consecrated as places of worship. On the contrary, every householder, every patriarch of his family lighted the sacrificial fire in his own home, and poured libations of the Soma-juice, and prayed to the gods in the hymns which were then the common property of the nation, for happiness to his family, for abundant crops and wealth of cattle, for immunity from sickness and victory over the black aborigines. There was no separate priestly caste, and men did not retire into forests, and subject themselves to penances in order to meditate on religion, and chant these hymns. On the contrary, the old Rishis, the real Rishis as we find them in the Rig Veda, and not the fabled ones of whom we hear such legendary stories in the Puranas, were worldly men, men with considerable property in crops and in cattle and surrounded by large families, men who in times of danger exchanged the plough for the spear and the sword, and defended against the black barbarians those blessings of civilization which they solicited from their gods, and secured with so much care.

But though each householder was himself the priest, the warrior and the cultivator, yet we find evidence of kings and rich men performing rites on a large scale by men specially proficient in the chanting of hymns and other religious rites, and engaged and paid for the pur-

pose. And as we go towards the later hymns of the Rig Veda, we find this class of professional priests gaining in reputation and in wealth, honoured by chiefs and kings, and rewarded by gifts of cattle and cars. We find mention of particular families specially proficient in the performance of religious rites, and in the composition of hymns; and many of the existing hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by members of these families, and were traditionally learnt by rote and preserved in those families.

The hymns of the Rig Veda are divided into ten *mandalas*, so arranged according to the Rishis by whom they were composed. The first and the last mandalas contain hymns composed by numerous Rishis, but the remaining eight mandalas belong, each of them, to a particular Rishi, or rather to a particular house or school of Rishis. Thus the second mandala is a collection of hymns composed by Gritsamada of the house of Bhrigu and his descendants, the third mandala belongs to Visvâmitra, the fourth mandala belongs to Vâmadeva, the fifth to Atri, the sixth to Bhâradvâja, the seventh to Vasishtha, the eighth to Kanva, and the ninth to Angiras. All these names are familiar to modern Hindus through the numberless legends which have surrounded them in Paurânik times, and modern Hindus still love to trace their descent from these ancient and revered houses. We shall have something to say about these Rishis and their legends in our next chapter.

It is to these and other venerable houses that the Aryan world owes the preservation of the most ancient compositions of the Aryan race. From century to century the hymns were handed down without break or intermission, and the youths of the priestly houses spent the prime of their life in learning by rote the sacred songs from the lips of their grey-headed sires. It was thus that the inestimable treasure, the Rig Veda, was preserved for hundreds of years by memory alone.

With the progress of civilization, and as religious rites were more and more monopolized by professional priests, the simple religion of the earlier times underwent a change. Priests boldly grappled with the deeper mysteries of nature, they speculated about creation and about the future world, and while continuing the worship of the nature-gods, they attained to the conception of the Supreme Deity. We find evidence of all this in the last portions of the Veda. We have already quoted some verses about the future world, we will add here some about creation and about the great Creator :—

"1. That all wise Father saw clearly, and after due reflection, created the sky and the earth in their watery form, and touching each other. When their boundaries were stretched afar, then the sky and the earth became separated.

"2. He who is the all-creator (Visvakarman) is great ; he creates and supports all, he is above all and sees all.

He is beyond the seat of the seven Rishis. So the wise men say, and the wise men obtain fulfilment of all their desires.

"3. He who has given us life, he who is the creator, he who knows all the places in this universe—*he is one, although he bears the names of many gods.* Other beings wish to know of him.

"7. You cannot comprehend him who has created all this; he is incomprehensible to your mind. People make guesses, being shrouded in a mist; they take their food for the support of their life, and utter hymns and wander about." (X, 82.)

The incomprehensible nature of the Deity has never been more clearly put than in the preceding hymn composed over three thousand years ago.

"1. At that time what is, was not, and what is not, was not. The earth was not, and the far-stretching sky was not. What was there that covered? Which place was assigned to what object? Did the inviolate and deep water exist?

"2. At that time death was not, nor immortality; the distinction between day and night was not. There was only ONE who lived and breathed without the help of air, supported by himself. Nothing was, except HE.

"3. At first darkness was covered in darkness. All was without demarcation; all was of watery form. The word that was a void was covered by what did not exist and was produced by meditation.

"4. Desire arose on the mind, the cause of creation was thus produced. Wise men reflect, and in their wisdom ascertain the birth of what is from what is not.

"5. Males with generating seed were produced, and powers were also produced. Their rays extended on both sides and below and above, a self-supporting principle beneath, an energy aloft.

"6. Who knows truly? Who will describe? When was all born? Whence were all these created? *The gods have been made after the creation.* Who knows whence they were made?

"7. Whence all these were created, from whom they came, whether any one created them or did not create,—is known only to Him who lives as Lord in the highest place. If He knows not (no one else does.)" (X. 129.)

Such is the first recorded attempt among the Aryan nations of the earth to pierce into the mysteries of creation; such are the bold and sublime if somewhat vague ideas which dawned in the minds of our forefathers over three thousand years ago, regarding the commencement of this great universe. One more hymn we will quote here, a remarkable hymn, shewing how the later Rishis soared beyond the conception of the nature-gods to the sublime idea of One Deity.

"1. In the beginning he of the golden womb (Hiranyagarbha) existed. He was the Lord of all from his birth. He placed this earth and sky in their respective places. Whom shall we worship with offerings?

"2. Him who has given life and strength; whose will is obeyed by all the gods; whose shadow is immortality, and whose slave is death. Whom shall we worship with offerings?

"3. Him who by his power is the sole king of all the living beings that see and move; him who is the Lord of all bipeds and quadrupeds. Whom shall we worship with offerings?

"4. Him by whose power these snowy mountains have been made, and whose creations are this earth and its oceans. Him whose arms are these quarters of space. Whom shall we worship with offerings?

"5. Him who has fixed in their places this sky and this earth; him who has established the heavens and the highest heaven; him who has measured the firmament. Whom shall we worship with offerings?

"6. Him by whom the sounding sky and earth have been fixed and expanded; him whom the resplendent sky and earth own as Almighty; him by whose support the sun rises and gains its lustre. Whom shall we worship with offerings?" (X, 121.)

We now see the force of the remark that the religion of the Rig Veda is a progressive religion, that it travels from nature up to nature's God. We see the entire journey of the human mind in this wonderful book, from the simple childlike admiration of the ruddy dawn, to the deep and sublime attempt to grasp the mysteries of creation and its great Creator.

But unfortunately this progress was not unattended with evils. As the priestly class rose in power and in knowledge, in wordly influence and in true wisdom, the worship of the ancestral gods fell almost entirely into their hands, and the people lost their manly self-reliance and sank under priestly influence. In the concluding portions of the Rig Veda therefore, we find evidences on the one hand of high thought and culture and bold speculations of the priests, and, on the other hand, of the growing superstition of the people. The numerous mantras prescribed for snake-bite, for diseases and evil omens, all belong to the last period of the Vedic Age, and betoken a growing superstition, and a greater dependence on the priestly class. At the close of the Rig Veda therefore, we discern the first germs of all that was the glory, and all that was the shame of Hindu civilization. The first speculations of philosophy and science have commenced,—and the subjection of the nation to a priestly class has also commenced!

CHAPTER VII.

VEDIC RISHIS.

WE have stated in the last chapter that certain pious and learned families obtained pre-eminence in the Vedic Period by their knowledge of performing religious sacrifices and their gift of composing hymns; that kings and wealthy lords delighted to honor and reward these families; and that it is to them that the Aryan world is indebted for handing down the Vedic hymns from generation to generation. Modern Hindus take a pride in tracing their descent from these ancient families, and their names are a household word in modern Hindu society. Some account of these ancient Rishis,—the revered pioneers of Hindu religion,—will therefore not be unwelcome to Hindu readers.

Pre-eminent among the Vedic Rishis, or rather Rishi families, stand the Visvâmitras and the Vasishthas. The learned and industrious scholar Dr. Muir has, in the first volume of his Sanscrit Texts, collected many legends about these Rishis from later Sanscrit literature; but there is no Hindu who has not read in books or heard from his boyhood, innumerable legends of this kind, connected with those revered names.

The Vasishthas and the Visvâmitras were both honored by the powerful conqueror, Sudâs. The hymns of the third mandala are ascribed to the Visvâmitras, and in the 53rd hymn we find the following passage: "The great god born, god commissioned Rishi, the beholder of men, has stayed the watery current. When Visvâmitra sacrificed for Sudâs, then Indra was propitiated through the Kausikas." Again, the hymns of the seventh mandala are ascribed to the Vasishthas, and in the 33rd hymn we find the following passage: "The Vasishthas in white robes, with their hair knots on the right, devoted to sacred rites, have gladdened me. Rising up, I call the people round the sacrificial grass. Let not the Vasishthas depart from my door." And in the celebrated 83rd hymn we find the well known passage: "Ye, O Indra and Varuna, have succoured Sudâs, when hemmed in on every side in the combat of the ten kings, where the white robed Tritsus with braided hair adored you reverently with prayers."

There was naturally some jealousy between these two priestly houses, and hard words were exchanged. The following verses in III, 53, are said to contain an imprecation against the Vasishthas:

"21. Indra, approach us to-day with many excellent succour: be propitious to us. May he who hates us fall low; and let the breath of life forsake him whom we hate.

"22. As the tree suffers from the axe; as the Simbala flower is broken; as the cauldron boiling over casts forth foam; so may the enemy, O Indra.

"23. The might of the destroyer is not perceived. Men lead away the Rishi as if he were a beast. The wise do not condescend to ridicule the fool. They do not lead the ass before the horse.

"24. These sons of Bhârata have learnt to turn away from, not to associate with (the Vasishthas). They urge the horse against them as against a foe. They bear about the bow in battle."

Two other verses in the same hymn are also supposed to refer to the same hostility between the two families, though no imprecation is apparent in them.

"15. The daughter of the sun, given by Jamadagni, everywhere diffusing herself and removing darkness, has produced a great sound, and has conveyed imperishable food for the gods.

"16. May she, everywhere diffusing herself, speedily supply abundant food to these men of the five tribes,—she, the daughter of the sun, possessing new life, and given by Jamadagni to me."

Vasishtha is supposed to have hurled back the imprecations in the following verses of VII, 104:

"13. Soma does not bless the wicked nor the ruler who abuses his power. He slays the demon; he slays the untruthful man; both are bound by the fetters of Indra.

"14. If I had worshipped false gods, or if I had called upon the gods in vain,—but why art thou angry with me O Jâtavedas? May vain talkers fall into thy destruction.

"15. May I die at once if I be a Yâtudhana, or if I hurt the life of any man. But may I be cut off from his ten friends who falsely called me a Yâtudhana.

"16. He who called me a Yâtudhana, when I am not so, or who said I am a bright devil,—may Indra strike him down with his great weapon, may he fall the lowest of all beings."

So far the jealousy of the two angry priests is intelligible and even natural, however unbecoming of their great learning and sanctity. But when we proceed from the Rig Veda to later Sanscrit literature, incidents which are human and natural become lost in a cloud of miraculous and monstrous legends.

It is assumed from the commencement in these later legends that Vasishtha was a Brâhman and Visvâmitra was a Kshatriya, although the Rig Veda justifies no such assumption and knows no Brâhmans and Kshatriyas as castes. On the contrary, Visvâmitra is the composer of some of the finest hymns cherished by later Brâhmans, including the sacred Gâyatrî or the sacred morning prayer of modern Brâhmans.

Having assumed that Visvâmitra was born a Kshatriya, the Mahâbhârata, the Harivansa, the Vishnu Purâna, and other later works repeat an amusing story to

account for the sage's attaining Brâhmanhood. Satyavati, a Kshatriya girl, had been married to Richika, a Brâhman. Richîka prepared a dish for his wife, which would make her conceive a son with the qualities of a Brâhman, and another dish for his mother-in-law (a Kshatriya's wife) which would make her conceive a son with the qualities of a Kshatriya. The two ladies however exchanged dishes; and so the Kshatriyanî conceived and bore Visvâmitra with the qualities of a Brâhman, and the Brâhman's wife Satyavatî bore Jamadagni, whose son, the fiery Parasurâma, though a Brâhman, became a renowned and destructive warrior! Such were the childish stories which the later writers had to invent to remove the difficulty they had created for themselves by assuming that Vedic Rishis belonged to particular castes!

But the Vedic account of the jealousy between Vasishtha and Visvâmitra has led to wilder legends. A legend is told in the Râmâyana and the Mahâbhârata that Visvâmitra, a king's son, went out hunting and came to the hermitage of Vasishtha. He was received with honor and entertained with delicious food and drink, and presented with precious jewels and dresses, all obtained by the sage from his wonder-working cow! The prince coveted this wonderful cow, and failing to persuade the Brâhman to relinquish it, wished to take it by force. But the might of the Kshatriya was unavailing against the power of the Brâhman; and the humbled

Visvâmitra then began his austerities which continued for thousands of years (!) until he became a Brâhman.

In the celebrated legend of Harischandra Visvâmitra appears as a rapacious Brâhman. He not only made the king give up his whole empire, but compelled him to sell his queen, his boy and himself as slaves to pay the inexorable Brâhman's fee! If such stories are invented to teach respect and duty due to Brâhmans, they fail in their object and inspire other sentiments. The bereaved Harischandra was however rewarded in the end, and Visvâmitra anointed his son as king, and Harischandra went to heaven. Vasishtha became angry and cursed Visvâmitra to be a Vaka or crane, and Visvâmitra, too, transformed Vasishtha into an Ari bird ! The two birds began a furious contest which shook the whole world, until Brahmâ had to interpose, and restored the saints to their own forms, and reconciled them !

In the legend of Trisanku, we are told that that prince wished to go bodily to heaven. Vasishtha declared the thing impossible, and in return for the king's angry words changed him to a Chandala. The fiery Visvâmitra now appeared on the scene. He declared the thing quite possible, and began a great sacrifice and proceeded with it in spite of Vasishtha's absence. Trisanku ascended to heaven, but Indra refused to receive him, and threw the intruder head downwards, towards the earth. The irrepressible Visvâmitra however threatened to

create another heaven with Indra and gods and stars! The gods had to give in, and Trisanku ascended to heaven, and shone like a star beyond the sun's course, but in a somewhat uncomfortable position, with his head still downwards!

The legend of Sunahsepha has arisen out of some hymns in the first mandala which are ascribed to him. The later legend says that he was the son of Richîka (and therefore nephew of Visvâmitra), and was sold by his father to be the victim of a sacrifice. He was bound to the stake and was about to be sacrificed when he repeated the hymns alluded to above, which his maternal uncle Visvâmitra had taught him, and was released. We shall have to allude to Sunahsepha's story in a later chapter, and examine some theories about the prevalence of human sacrifice which have been built on it.

In the legend of Kalmâshapâda, we are told that Visvâmitra caused that king to kill a hundred sons of Vasishtha. In various other legends which have almost become household stories for Hindu boys and girls, these two sages continually appear, in defiance of chronology and date, and are always at enmity with each other. The rival priests appear in courts of kings, twenty, thirty, or fifty generations removed from each other, and there is hardly a classical composition of note about a royal house, or a semi-divine hero, in which we do not find mention of Vasishtha and Visvâmitra, eternally the

rivals of each other. Thus the Vishnu Purâna makes Vasishtha the priest of Ikshvâku's son Nimi, as well as the priest of Sagara who was 37th in descent from Ikshvâku; and the Râmâyana makes Vasishtha the priest of Râma who was 61st in descent from Ikshvâku! Such is the use which later romancers have made of the simple materials furnished by the Rig Veda, and such is the manner in which they have piled story upon story, and myth upon myth in connection with incidents which in the ancient Veda are simple, natural and human. Not only the Rishis of the Veda but every deity, and we may almost say every simile or allegory in the Rig Veda about a natural phenomenon has received such treatment in the hands of later imaginative Hindus.

But while a hundred wild stories were invented in later days to account for Visvâmitra's attaining Brâhmanhood, there was no thought of denying that accepted fact. Every legend, every learned disquisition, every childish tale, every great work, from the Mahâbhârata to Manu and the Purânas,—admit that Visvâmitra was a Kshatriya and a Brâhman. Yudhisthira in the Anusâsana Parva (section 3) of the Mahâbhârata enquires of Bhîshma how Visvâmitra had not only become a Brâhman but had established "the great and wise family of the Kusikas *which included Brâhmans and hundreds of Brâhman Rishis.*" The question would be a difficult one to answer in the Paurânik Age in which the Mahâbhârata

received its last touches. The question would not be difficult of solution in the Epic Age when the caste-system was still a pliable institution. And the question would not arise at all in the Age of Visvâmitra himself, *i.e.*, in the Vedic Age, when caste as such did not exist.

Again in the same Anusâsana Parva (section 52), Yudhisthira enquires how Parasurâma, the son of the Brahman Jamadagni, was possessed of the qualities of a Kshatriya. Later legends have made Jamadagni's son the converse of Visvâmitra. Parasurâma is represented to have been a fiery Brâhman who killed his mother, and then destroyed the Kshatriya race twenty-seven times, just as Visvâmitra is represented as a pious Kshatriya who rose to Brâhmanhood by his holiness and austerities. We have seen one attempt to solve the difficulty by the story that Visvâmitra's mother and Parasurâma's grandmother exchanged dishes! But it is scarcely necessary to descend to such childish tales if we only remember the fact that both Visvâmitra and Jamadagni were Vedic Rishis; and they bore arms and composed hymns when Kshatriyas and Brâhmans, as such, were unknown.

Jamadagni's name occurs in the Rig Veda, but not that of his renowned son Parasurâma. That character therefore is a later invention, and the story of his wars with Kshatriyas is probably based on actual hostilities which may have taken place early in the Epic Age between stalwart priests and proud kings, just when

the caste-system was forming itself. An institution like this is not formed in a day, and some centuries must have elapsed, even after the commencement of the Epic Period, before professions became absolutely hereditary. Even in the Mahâbhârata which, however altered in later ages, is based on the traditions of the Epic Age, we find the most holy and religious character is Yudhisthira, a Kshatriya, and the most renowned strategist and warrior is Drona, a Brâhman.

From the legends of the Visvâmitras and the Vasishthas let us now turn to the scarcely less renowned houses of the Bhrigus, the Kanvas, the Bhâradvâjas and the Angirases. All these are families of Vedic Rishis, composers of Vedic hymns; and later writers therefore feel somewhat uncertain about their caste. They are sometimes called Brâhmans with the character of Kshatriyas, sometimes Kshatriyas with the character of Brâhmans; and occasionally the bold truth is conjectured that these Rishis lived before the institution of caste was formed.

The Angirases are the reputed authors of the ninth mandala of the Rig Veda. About the Angirases, the Vishnu Purâna (IV, 2, 2) has the following: "The son of Nâbhâga was Nâbhâga; his son was Ambarîsha; his son was Virûpa; from him sprang Prishadasva, and from him Rathînara. On this subject there is this verse: ✓ These persons *descended from a Kshatriya stock and afterwards known as Angirases* were the chief of the

Rathînaras, *Brâhmans possessing also the character of Kshatriyas.*"

The Vishnu Purâna in another place (IV, 3, 5) traces the descent of the Angiras Hâritas *from the Kshatriya king Ikshvâku.* The Vâyu Purâna says of the Hâritas that "they were sons of Angiras *and Brâhmans with the properties of Kshatriyas.*" The Linga Purâna also maintains that they were the followers of Angiras, "*and Brâhmans with the properties of Kshatriyas.*" He will be a wise reader who will unravel from these statements the caste of the Angirases!

Vâmadeva and Bhâradvâja are reputed to be the authors of the fourth and sixth Mandalas of the Rig Veda. The Matsya Purâna includes them (section 132) among the Angirases of whom we have spoken before.

To the Gritsamadas are attributed the hymns of the second mandala of the Rig Veda. The commentator Sâyana says of him that he was formerly the son of Sunahotra of the Angiras race, but he afterwards became Gritsamada, son of Sunaka, of the Bhrigu race. This somewhat mystic legend is elaborated in the Mahâbhârata Anusâsana Parva (section 30), in which we are told that Vîtahavya, a Kshatriya king, had taken shelter with Bhrigu, and Bhrigu, in order to save the fugitive from his pursuer, stated "there is no Kshatriya here, all these are Brâhmans." The word of Bhrigu could not prove untrue, and the fugitive Kshatriya Vîtahavya forthwith bloomed into Brâhmanhood and

became Gritsamada! It must be allowed that this was an easier process than the penance of thousands of years which Visvâmitra had to go through,—not to mention that his mother had exchanged dishes with a Brâhman's wife!

But the story of Gritsamada's change of caste is not universally accepted. The Vishnu Purâna and the Vâyu Purâna conjecture the bold truth that Gritsamada lived before the caste institution was formed. "From Gritsamada was descended Saunaka *who originated the four castes.*" (*Vish. Pur.*, IV, 8.) "The son of Gritsamada was Sunaka from whom sprang Saunaka. *In this race were born Brâhmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sûdras.*" (*Vâyu Purâna.*) The Harivansa (section 29) repeats this statement.

But the Vishnu and the Vâyu Purânas and the Harivansa are scarcely consistent, for we find elsewhere in these works that the four castes originated with Bhârgabhûmi who was the *twentieth in descent* from the brother of Gritsamada. Both these accounts however point to the ancient tradition that Gritsamada lived before the caste-system was instituted.

If we turn from the Gritsamadas to the Kanvas, authors of the eighth mandala of the Rig Veda, we find the same uncertainty about their caste. The Vishnu Purâna (IV, 19), and the Bhâgavata Purâna (IX, 20, 6, 7), maintain that Kanva was the son of Apratiratha or of Ajamîdha, both being descendants of Puru a

Kshatriya. Nevertheless the Kanvas were regarded as Brâhmans. "From Ajamîḍha sprang Kanva, and from him Medhâtithi, *from whom were descended the Kanvanaya Brâhmans.*" (*Vish. Pur.*, IV, 19.)

Of the same race we read in the Vishnu Purâna (IV, 21), that "*the race which gave origin to Brâhmans and Kshatriyas*, and was purified by regal sages shall terminate with Kshemaka in the Kali age." Again in (IV, 19), we read of Garga of the same race that "from Garga sprang Sivi; from him were descended the Gârgyas and Saivyas, *who having the character of Kshatriyas became Brâhmans.*" Regarding Garga's brother Mahâvîrya we read (IV, 19) that he had three grandsons, Trayaruna, Pushkari, and Kapi, who *attained to Brâhmanhood.*" And of Bali, one of the descendants of Anu, brother of Puru, we read in the Matsya Purâna and in the Vâyu Purâna that *he established the four castes;* and the Harivansa (section 31) repeats this story.

And lastly, if we turn from the Kanvas to Atri, the reputed author of the fifth mandaḷa of the Rig Veda, we find the name connected by later legends with the creation of the human race itself. Thus the Vishnu Purâna (IV, 6), calls him the son of Brahmâ, and the grandfather of Pururavas *who belonged to the Kshatriya race.*

These extracts are enough. The extracts are made from works composed or revised two or three thousand years after the time of the Vedic Rishis, but those ex-

tracts enable us to comprehend the status and position of the Vedic religious leaders and warriors, and are therefore not out of place in an account of the Vedic Period. Writing at such a long distance of time from the Vedic Age, the modern authors often misapprehended ancient facts and traditions. But nevertheless, the unswerving loyalty to the past which has ever characterised Hindu writers prevented them from tampering with such traditions. Those traditions pointed to a state of society which had long past away and which had become utmost unintelligible. Paurânik writers could scarcely comprehend that priests and warriors could spring from the same race, that a Rishi could be a warrior, or that a warrior could be a priest. They tried to explain such traditions by a hundred different theories and legends, but nevertheless they have faithfully and piously handed down the traditions unchanged and unaltered. Thus to make only one more extract, the Matsya Purâna enumerates 91 Vedic Rishis, and concludes with the following suggestive passage, (section 132): "Thus 91 persons have been declared, by whom the hymns have been given forth. *They were Brâhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas*, all sons of Rishis. They were the offspring of the Rishikas, sons of Rishis, Vedic Rishis."

Thus the Purâna faithfully preserves the ancient tradition that the Vedic hymns were the common property of the entire Aryan population. And when the

writer tells us that the composers of those hymns were Brâhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, we have little difficulty in discovering in that statement a dim recollection of the truth that the hymns were composed by the *undivided ancestors of those castes.*

Modern writers classed Rishis under three classes, *viz.*, Devarshis, or saintly gods like Nârada; Brahmarshis, or saintly Brâhmans like Kanva of the Sakuntalâ drama; and Râjarshis, or saintly Kshatriyas like Janaka, king of the Videhas. The ancient Vedic Rishis did not answer to any of these classes, did not belong exclusively to any of these categories, and were therefore a standing puzzle to modern writers. Hence the numerous legends to account for what was unaccountable; and often in the midst of these wild conjectures, the modern writer made a bold guess after the truth, and maintained that the Vedic Rishis must have lived before caste was originated. We do not wonder at the theories and legends which were multiplied in such profusion; we admire the boldness with which the truth was sometimes conjectured.

For the rest, these invaluable traditions—that priests and warriors were descended from the same races, and that the same Rishis were often both priests and warriors,—enable us to comprehend the true position of Vedic Rishis. For, divested of their miraculous and legendary character, what do these traditions indicate? They indicate that that the venerable families of the

olden times,—like those of the Vasishthas, the Visvâmitras, the Angirases and the Kanvas,—furnished renowned warriors and eminent priests at the same time. A Percy or a Douglas might be an ambitious priest or a fiery warrior, and so might a Kanva or an Angiras. To be sure, the Hindu houses were pre-eminently priestly as the European houses were military, but *caste* was as unknown to the one as to the other. Many a baron of medieval Europe whose names are still preserved in the history of the crusades, had their fathers or uncles, sons or nephews, immured in the solitude of holy monasteries; and many a Vasishtha or Visvâmitra, whose religious hymns we still cherish and revere, had their sons or nephews, engaged in the wars of the Vedic Period, in the unending contests against the aborigines of the soil. These facts are proved by the texts of the Rig Veda itself which we have quoted in a previous chapter ; and they are confirmed by the legends and traditions which we have quoted in this chapter from later Sanscrit literature. The Vedic Rishis composed their hymns, fought their wars, and ploughed their fields; but were neither Brâhmans, nor Kshatriyas, nor Vaisyas. The great Rishi houses of the Vedic Age furnished priests and soldiers, but were no more Brâhmans or Kshatriyas than the Percies or Douglases of midieval Europe were Brâhmans or Kshatriyas.

BOOK II.

EPIC PERIOD B. C. 1400 TO 1000.

CHAPTER I.

LITERATURE OF THE PERIOD.

WE have closed our account of the Vedic Age, when the Hindu Aryans crossed the Indus and gradually conquered and occupied the whole tract of country watered by the Indus and its five tributaries. We have seen that the sole work of this period which remains to us is the collection of hymns known as the Rig Veda Sanhitâ, and we have also seen how these hymns illustrate the civilization of the Vedic Period. We now proceed to describe the civilization of the Epic Period, when the Hindus crossed the Sutlej, moved down the basin of the Ganges and the Jumna, and founded powerful kingdoms along the entire valley as far down as modern Benares and North Behar. And as in the case of the Vedic Age, so in the case of the Epic Age, we will base our account on contemporaneous literature.

What is the contemporaneous literature of the Epic Age? And what is the contemporaneous literature of the Philosophical or Rationalistic Age that followed?

The Brâhmanas, the Âranyakas, and the Upanishads which constantly refer to the actions of the Kurus, the Panchâlas, the Kosalas, and the Videhas *living in the valley of the Ganges*, form the literature of the Epic Age. The Sûtras which presuppose the rise of rationalism in India, and which were composed when the Aryans *had expanded all over Eastern and Southern India*, form the literature of the Rationalistic Age.

About thirty years ago Professor Max Müller published his great work on Sanskrit literature and gave reasons, which have since generally been accepted, for considering the mass of Sûtra literature as subsequent to the Brâhmana literature. He shewed that the Sûtra literature presupposed and quoted the Brâhmana literature, and the converse was never the case. He shewed that the Brâhmana literature reflected an age of priestly supremacy and unquestioning obedience on the part of the people, which was anterior to the practical and philosophical and sceptical age of the Sûtras. He shewed that the Brâhmana literature down to the Upanishads was considered *revealed* in India, while all Sûtra works were ascribed to human authors. And he enforced these and similar arguments by a wealth of illustrations and a degree of erudition which left nothing to be desired.*

* Later researches have confirmed the view that not only are the Sûtras of a particular school subsequent to the Brâhmanas of the same school, but that the body of the Sûtra literature as a whole is subsequent to the

It is needless to say that we cannot enter into the details of these learned discussions. True to the plan of the present work, we will make only a few remarks not on the *literary*, but on the *historical* beatings of the facts stated above. What is the *historical* import of this sequence in the different classes of Ancient Sanskrit literature? What is the *historical* reason of this sequence? Why did the Ancient Hindus compose their works in one particular form, the Vedic hymns, for a number of centuries? Why did they gradually abandon that style of composition, and write the prolix and dogmatic prose

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body of the Brâhmana literature. Thus to quote one instance only, Dr. Bulher, who does not altogether agree with Max Müller on this point, nevertheless points out in his introductions of the Dharma Sûtras that those Sûtras repeatedly quote from Brâhmanas of different schools. He shews that the oldest Dharma Sûtra extant presupposes an Aranyaka of the Black Yajur Veda, a Brâhmana of the Sâma Veda, and even an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda! He points out that Vasishtha's Dharma Sûtra quotes from a Brâhmana of the Rig Veda, an Aranyaka of the Black Yajur Veda and a Brâhmana of the White Yajur Veda, and also mentions an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. So also Baudhâyana's Dharma Sûtra quotes from the Brâhmanas both of the Black and the White Yajur Veda. On the other hand, no Brâhmana ever quotes from any Sûtra work.

No scholar maintains that the last Brâhmana work was composed before the first Sûtra work was written. But there can be little doubt on the evidence now before us, that there was a period when the *prevailing style* of writing was the prose style of the Brâhmanas, and that this period was followed by a period when the *prevailing style* was aphorisms or Sûtras.

Brâhmanas, for some succeeding centuries? And why again did they gradually change this for the concise aphorisms of the Sûtras during the next few centuries? What is there in the nature of things that would induce the Ancient Hindus to take up different styles of composition at different periods of their history,—as if to afford the future historian a clue to the dates of their writings?

The question is more easily asked than answered. It may be answered however by a counter question. What is there in the nature of things which prevented the Chronicles and Romances of Mediæval Europe being composed after the 14th and 15th centuries? Why did not Hume and Froude compose Chronicles? Why did not Fielding and Scott compose Mediæval Romances? The subjects were still the same;—why was the composition so different that it would be possible to demarcate the feudal ages from the modern period on the testimony of European literature, even if every vestige of European history was destroyed?

An Englishman would answer: It was impossible that Chronicles and feudal Romances should be continued after Elizabeth had reigned and Shakespeare and Bacon had written. A new light had dawned on Europe. The human mind had expanded. Religion was purified. A new world had been discovered. Modern philosophy had taken its rise. Commerce and maritime enterprise had received a wonderful development.

Feudalism had died a natural death. The face of the European world had been changed.

Were it possible to bring before the reader the history of Hindu civilization as vividly as he has before him the history of European civilization, he would give similar replies with regard to the epochs of Indian History. It was impossible in the nature of things that Hymns like those of the Rig Veda should be composed after the Hindus had achieved the elaborate civilization, and adopted the pompous religious rites of the Epic Period. The simple fervency with which the Punjab Aryans looked up to the Sky, the Dawn, or the Sun, had passed, once and for ever. Simple natural phenomena did not excite the wonder and religious admiration of the cultured and somewhat artificial Gangetic Aryans engaged in solemn rites and pompous sacrifices. The fervent prayer to the rain god Indra, or the loving address to the blushing goddess Ushas (Dawn) was almost impossible. The very import and object of the old simple hymns were forgotten, and sacrifices of various descriptions from the simple morning and evening libations, to the elaborate royal sacrifices lasting for many years, formed the essence of the later religion. The rules of the sacrifices, the import and object of every minute rite, the regulations for each insignificant observance,—these occupied the religious minds of the people, these formed the subject of discussions between learned kings and royal priests, these

formed the bulk of the Brâhmana literature. It was as impossible for the cultured writers and thinkers of the day to go back to the buried past and disinter the simple faith of the Vedic Hymns, as it was impossible for the erudite schoolmen of Mediæval Europe to produce the wild and simple Norwegian Sagas of a bygone age.

Again, the elaborate and dogmatic trifling of the scholastic philosophy of Europe was impossible after Descartes had lived and Bacon had written. In the same way, and for the same reason, the elaborate trifling and priestly pedantry of the Brâhmanas was impossible in the Hindu world after Kapila had taught and Gautama Buddha had preached. The human mind in India had received a new impetus. A new world had been discovered beyond the Vindhya range, though the name of the Indian Columbus, who first planted the Hindu flag in a southern kingdom, is forgotten. The earnest and fervent Upanishads had been written and marked a strong reaction against priestly pedantry. Kapila—the Descartes of India—had startled the Hindu world by his Sânkhya philosophy; and Gautama—the Luther of India—had proclaimed a reformed faith for the poor and the lowly, and protested against the privileges of priests. New sciences had started into existence. A new light had dawned in the Hindu world.

The Brâhmana literature died a natural death. The elaborate and unmeaning dogmas were left in the shade;

the rules for the performance of the ancient sacrifices were condensed for practical purposes. It was a practical age when everything was condensed and codified. The rules of life were codified. Philosophy was condensed into aphorisms, science and learning in every department were condensed. Treatises were composed in every branch of human knowledge in a concise style, in which teachers could teach and learners could learn by rote. And thus it is that we have the entire literature of Rationalistic Age in the shape of aphorisms,—of Sûtras.

This is the historical import of the three different classes of Ancient Sanskrit literature, which represent three distinct epochs of Hindu history. The Hymns reflect the manly simplicity of the Vedic Age. The Brâhmanas reflect the pompous ceremonials of the Epic Age. The Sûtras reflect the science and learning, and even the scepticism of the Rationalistic Age.

We have said before that the tide of Hindu colonization rolled eastward and southward in each successive period, and the different classes of Sanskrit literature spoken above attest to this onward movement. In Europe feudal literature and modern literature were developed on the same arena, in Italy and Germany, in France and England. In India, the case was different. For the Aryans of India went on conquering through successive periods, and the literature of each period speaks of the portion of India under the Aryan

influence and domination in that particular period. This in itself is an invaluable index to the dates of the different classes of literature. The Hymns of the Rig Veda speak of the Punjab and Cabul alone,—India beyond the Punjab is unknown to the Rig Veda. The banks of the distant Ganges and the Jumna are rarely alluded to; the scene of all the wars and social ceremonies and religious sacrifices of the Rig Veda are the banks of the Indus and its tributaries and the Sarasvatî. This was the Hindu world when the hymns were composed.

But the Hindus soon threw out colonies all over Northern India. In course of centuries these colonies rose into importance and formed powerful kingdoms, and by their progress and learning threw the mother-country, the Punjab, into shade. In the Brâhmanas we hear of the mighty Kurus in the tract of the country round modern Delhi; we hear of the powerful Panchâlas in the country round modern Kanouj; we read of the Videhas in the country now known as North Behar we read of the Kosalas in Oude, and we read of the Kâsîs in the country round modern Benares. These colonists developed pompous sacrificial rites, had illustrious and learned courts like those of Janaka and Ajâtasatru and Janamejaya Pârikshita, they founded schools or parishads in villages and towns, and they developed a new social system based on caste distinctions. It is of these colonists and their civilization that

we mostly read in the Brâhmanas ;—the Punjab is almost forgotten, and Southern India is still unknown, or is referred to as the home of wild beasts and wild men.

On the other hand, the Sûtra literature makes us familiar with great Hindu kingdoms in Southern India, and some of the existing Sûtras were composed in Southern India and lay down rules for the conduct of Southern Hindus.

We have spoken of the Vedic Period and the Rig Veda Hymns in the First Book of this work. We will speak of the Epic Period and the Brâhmana literature in this Second Book. And we will speak of the Rationalistic Period aud the Sûtra literature in the Third Book.

We have seen before that the Rig Veda Hymns were *composed* in the Vedic Age and were finally *compiled* in the Epic Age. The other three Vedas known as the Sâma Veda, the Yajur Veda (White and Black), and the Atharva Veda, were also compiled in this Epic Age.

The reasons which led to the compilation of the Sâma Veda and the Yajur Veda have been ascertained with a fair degree of certainty. We find mention in the hymns of the Rig Veda of different classes of priests who performed different duties at sacrifices. The Adhvaryus were entrusted with the material performance of sacrifice. They measured the ground, built the altar, prepared the sacrificial vessels, fetched wood and

water, and immolated animals. The Udgâtris on the other hand were entrusted with the duty of singing, as according to ancient custom some parts of the sacrifice had to be accompanied by songs. The Hotris had to recite hymns. And lastly, the Brahmans presided at sacrifices over all the rest.

Of these four classes of priests, neither the Brahman nor the Hotri required any special manual. For the Brahman was required to know the entire ceremonial to be able to superintend the performance of the sacrifice, to advise the other priests on doubtful points, and to correct their mistakes. The Hotri too had simply to recite, and if he knew the hymns of the Rig Veda, he did not require any separate compilation. But the duties of the Adhvaryu and the Udgâtri required special training. Special sacrificial formulas must have existed for the former, and a stock of the Rig Veda Hymns, set to music, must have also existed for the latter in the Vedic Period, for we find the names Yajus and Sâman in the Rig Veda Hymns. These formulas and chants were however separately collected and compiled at a later age in the Epic Period; and these separate compilations, in the shape which they last took, are the Yajur Veda and the Sâma Veda as we have them now.

No name has been handed down to us as the compiler of the Sâma Veda. Professor Benfey has pointed out, what Dr. Stevenson previously suspected, that all

the verses of the Sâma Veda, with the exception of a few, are to be found in the Rig Veda; and it is supposed that these few verses too must have been contained in some other recension of the Rig Veda now lost to us. It is quite clear therefore that the Sâma Veda is only a selection from the Rig Veda set to music for a special purpose.

Of the compilers of Yajur Veda, we have some information. The more Ancient or Black Yajur Veda is called the Taittirîya Sanhitâ from Tittiri, who probably compiled or promulgated it in its present shape. In the Aṇukramanî of the Âtreya recension of this Veda, however, we are told that the Veda was handed down by Vaisampâyana to Yâska Paingi, by Yâska to Tittiri by Tittiri to Ukha, and by Ukha to Âtreya. This would shew that the existing oldest recension of the Yajur Veda was not the first recension.

We have fuller information with regard to the more recent White Yajur Veda. It is called the Vâjasaneyi Sanhitâ, from Yâjnavalkya Vâjasaneya, the compiler or promulgator of that Veda. Yâjnavalkya held the influential position of chief priest in the court of Janaka king of the Videhas, and the promulgation of this new Veda proceeded probably from the court of that learned king.

There is a striking difference in arrangement between the White Yajur Veda and the Black Yajur Veda. In the latter, the sacrificial formulas are followed by dog-

matic explanation, and by accounts of ceremonials belonging to them. In the former, the formulas only find place in the Sanhitâ, the explanation and the ritual being assigned to the Brâhmana. It is not improbable, as has been supposed, that it was to improve the old arrangement, and to separate the exegetic matter from the formulas, that Yâjnavalkya, of the court of Janaka, founded the new school known as the Vâjasaneyins, and that their labors resulted in a new (Vâyasaneyi) Sanhitâ and an entirely separate (Satapatha) Brâhmana.

But although the promulgation of the White Yajur Veda is ascribed to Yâjnavalkya, a glance at its contents will show that it is not the compilation of any one man or even of one age. Of its 40 chapters only the first 18 are cited in full and explained in due order in the first nine books of the Satapatha Brâhmana; and it is the formulas of these 18 chapters only which are found in the older Black Yajur Veda. These 18 chapters then are the oldest portion of the White Yajur Veda, and may have been compiled or promulgated by Yâjnavalkya Vâjasaneya. The next 7 chapters are very likely a later addition. The remaining 15 chapters are undoubtedly a still later addition, and are expressly called Parisishta or Khila, *i.e.*, supplement.

Of the Atharva Veda, we need only state that it was not, generally recognised as a Veda till long after the period of which we are speaking, though a class of literature known as the Atharvângiras was growing up

during the Epic Period, and is alluded to in the later portions of some of the Brâhmanas. Throughout the first three Periods of Hindu history, and even in Manu and other matrical codes, three Vedas are generally recognised. And although the claims of the Atharvan were sometimes put forward, still the work was not generally recognised as a fourth Veda till long after the Christian era. Hundreds of passages recognising three Vedas only could be cited from the literature of the period of which we are now speaking; but we are enable to make room for such passages. We will only refer our readers to a few passages, *viz.*: Aitareya Brâhmana V, 32; Satapatha Brâhmana IV, 6, 7; Aitareya Âranyaka III, 2, 3; Brihadâranyaka Upanishad I, 5; and Chhândogya Upanishad III and VII; and in this last work after the three Vedas are named, Atharvângiras is classed with Itihâsa. It is only in the Brâhmana and Upanishads of the Atharva Veda itself that we find a uniform recognition of this work as a Veda. For instance, it is the principal object of the Gopatha Brâhmana to show the necessity of four Vedas. A carriage, we are told, does not proceed with less than four wheels, an animal cannot walk with less than four feet, nor can sacrifice be perfect with less than four Vedas! Such special pleading only proves that the fourth Veda was not yet recognised generally, even in the comparatively recent times when the Gopatha Brâhmana was composed.

Atharvan and Angiras are, as Professor Whitney remarks, half mythical names of ancient and venerated Indian families, and it was sought to bring the recent composition into connection with these ancient names! The Veda is divided into twenty books, and contains nearly six thousand verses, and a 6th of this is in prose. Of the remaining, one-sixth is found among the hymns of the Rig Veda, mostly in the tenth book. The 19th book is a kind of supplement to the previous 18, while the 20th book is made up of extracts from the Rig Veda.

The entire Veda principally consists of formulas intended to protect men against the baneful influences of divine powers, against diseases, noxious animals, and curses of enemies. It knows a host of "imps and hobgoblins," and offers homage to them to prevent them from doing harm. The Mantra brings from the unwilling hands of gods the favours that are wanted. The book is full of incantations calculated to procure long life or wealth or recovery from illness. It also contains invocations for good luck in journeys, in gaming, &c. These hymns resemble similar hymns in the last book of the Rig Veda; only as Professor Weber has pointed out, in the Rig Veda they are apparently additions made at the time of the compilation, while in the Atharva Veda they are the natural utterance of the present.

We must now hasten to an account of those compositions called the Brâhmanas, after which the literature

of this Age has been named the Brâhmana literature. We have seen that in the Black Yajur Veda the texts are as a rule followed by their dogmatic explanations. These explanations were supposed to elucidate the texts and to explain their hidden meanings, and they contained the speculations of generations of priests. A single discourse of this kind was called a Brâhmana; and in later times collections or digests of such discourses were called Brâhmanas.

The Rig Veda has two Brâhmanas, *viz.*, the Aitareya and the Kaushîtaki. The composition of the former is attributed to Mahidâsa Aitareya, son of Itarâ, one of the many wives of a Rishi. The story is given by Sâyana in his introduction to the Aitareya Brâhmana. In the Kaushîtaki Brâhmana, on the other hand, special regard is paid to the sage Kaushîtaka, whose authority is considered to be final. For the rest, these two Brâhmanas seem to be only two recensions of the same work, used by the Aitaryins and the Kaushîtakins respectively, and they agree with each other in many respects, except that the last ten chapters of the Aitareya are not found in the Kaushîtaki, and belong probably to a later age.

The Sâma Veda has the Tândya or Panchavinsa Brâhmana, the Sadvinsa Brâhmana, and the better known Chhândogya Brâhmana. Other Brâhmanas of the Sâma Veda have been discovered by Burnell in Southern India.

The Black Yajur Veda or Taittirîya Sanhitâ has its Taittirîya Brâhmana, and the White Yajur Veda or Vâjasaneyi Sanhitâ has its voluminous Satapatha Brâhmana. We have already stated that the Satapatha Brâhmana is attributed to Yâjnavalkya, though it is more likely the handiwork of the school he founded, as he is often quoted in the work. Nor does the work belong entirely to one school or to one age. On the contrary, as in the case of the White Yajur Veda Sanhitâ so in the case of its Brâhmana, there are reasons to think that the work belongs to different periods. The first 18 chapters of the Sanhitâ are the oldest part of the work, and the first nine books of the Brâhmana, which comment on these 18 chapters, are the oldest part of the Brâhmana. These nine books contain 60 chapters, and were called Shashtipatha in the time of Patanjali, as Professor Weber has pointed out. The remaining five books with their 40 chapters are of later date than the first nine books.

Even in the first nine books Yâjnavalkya is not always quoted as the final authority. His opinions are authoritative in the first five books, while the remaining four quote Sândilya. The two lines of teachers meet in their common successor Sanjîvîputra (named after his mother according to the custom of the times), and it is supposed that Sanjîvîputra reconciled the two schools, and finally adjusted the first nine books. Thus this famous Brâhmana seems to have been first started by the school of

Yâjnavalkya, and the work of that school appears to have been combined with the work of the school of Sândilya; and to the nine books thus formed, five more books were added at a later age.

The Atharva Veda has its Gopatha Brâhmana—a comparatively recent production—the contents of which are a medley, derived to a large extent from other sources.

Next after the Brâhmanas come the Âranyakas, which may indeed be considered as the last portions of the Brâhmanas. They are so-called, as Sâyana informs us, because they had to be read in the forest, while the Brâhmanas were for use in sacrifices performed by householders in their homes. We scarcely meet with any allusions to retirement in forests in the Hymns of the Rig Veda, and forest life and retirement are undoubtedly a far later institution than sacrifices in the householder's own fireside.

The Rig Veda has its Kaushîtaki Âranyaka and its Aitareya Âranyaka, the latter ascribed to Mahidâsa Aitareya. The Black Yajur Veda has its Taittirîya Âranyaka, and the last book of the Satapatha Brâhmana is called its Âranyaka. The Sâma Veda and the Atharva Veda have no Âranyakas.

What gives these Âranyakas a special importance, however, is, that they are the proper depositories of those celebrated religious speculations known as the Upanishads. The Upanishads which are the best known, and which are undoubtedly ancient, are the

Aitareya and the Kaushîtaki, found in the Âranyakas of those names, and belonging to the Rig Veda; the Chhândogya and the Talavakâra (or Kena) belonging to the Sâma Veda; the Vâjasaneyi (or Isa) and the Brihadâranyaka belonging to the White Yajur Veda, and the Taittirîya belonging to the Black Yajur Veda. The Katha too is said to belong to the Black Yajur Veda, but more probably belongs to the Atharva Veda, together with the Mundaka and the Prasna. These ten are the ancient Upanishads to which Sankarâcharya principally appeals as his great commentary on the Vedânta Sûtras. But once after the Upanishads had come to be considered sacred and authoritative works, new compositions of the class began to be added until the total number reaches 200 or more. The later Upanishads, which are generally known as the Atharva Upanishads, come down as far as the Paurânik times, and as Professor Weber points out, enter the lists in behalf of sectarian views, instead of being devoted to an inquiry into the nature of Brâhman or the Supreme Spirit, like the old Upanishads. Indeed, the later Upanishads come down to a period long subsequent to the Mahommedan Conquest of India, and the idea of a universal religion which was cherished by the great emperor Akbar finds expression in an Upanishad called the Allah Upanishad! We need hardly say that we well refer in this work only to the ten ancient Upanishads, and not to the later Upanishads.

With the Upanishads the Epic Period ends, and the so-called revealed literature of India ends also. Other classes of works, besides those named herein, undoubtedly existed in the Epic Period, but have now been lost to us, or more frequently replaced by newer works. A fragment only of the vast literature of the Epic Period has come down to us, and the principal works which remain have been detailed above.

Of the Epics themselves, the Mahâbhârata and the Râmâyana we will speak in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER II.

KURUS AND PANCHALAS, B. C. 1400 TO 1200.

THE tide of Aryan conquests rolled onward. If the reader will refer to a map of India, he will find that from the banks of the Sutlej to the banks of the Jumna there is not a very wide strip of country to cross. The Aryans who had colonized the whole of the Punjab were not likely to remain inactive on the banks of the Sutlej or of the Sarasvatî. Already in the Vedic Period bands of enterprising colonists had crossed those rivers and explored the distant shores of the Jumna and the Ganges, and those noble streams, though alluded to in the hymns as on the very horizon of the Hindu world, were not unknown. In course of time the emigrants to the fertile banks of the two rivers must have swelled in number, until the colonists founded a powerful kingdom of their own in the country near modern Delhi,—the kingdom of the Kurus.

From what part of the Punjab the Kuru colonists came, is a question still involved in obscurity. In the Aitareya Brâhmana (VIII, 14,) it is stated that the Uttara Kurus and the Uttara Mâdras lived beyond the Himalaya. In later works, the Mahâbhârata (I, 47, 19,

&c.) and the Râmâyana (IV, 44, 88, &c.), the land of the Uttara Kurus, has already become a mythical country. Uttara Kuru is identified with Ottorakorra of Ptolemy, and Lassen places the country somewhere east of modern Kashgar; but we would place the Uttara Kuru alluded to in the Aitareya Brâhmana somewhere north of the Sub-Himalayan range, *i.e.*, in Kashmir. In the Rig Veda itself, we find mention of the Kuru-Krivis; and Professor Zimmer supposes that they lived in the valleys of Kashmir. There are reasons therefore for supposing that the Kurus originally lived among the hills in the extreme north of the Punjab; and that large numbers of this tribe moved southwards until they formed a powerful colony or kingdom between the Jumna and the Ganges. We assume that this kingdom rose to prowess and fame about 1400 B. C.

When the Hindus had once begun to colonize the fertile banks of the Jumna and the Ganges, swarms of the colonists would naturally march down the course of those streams and soon occupy the whole of the Doab, *i.e.*, the tract of country between those rivers. And this was what they did. While we find the Kurus settling down in the country near modern Delhi, we find another adventurous tribe, the Panchâlas occupying the tract of country near modern Kanouj. The original seat of the Panchâlas is still less known than that of the Kurus. Professor Zimmer thinks that they also came from the northern hills like the Kurus. Indeed,

it has been supposed that the allied tribes known in the Rig Veda as the Kuru-Krivis were the ancestors of the allied tribes of the Doab, known as the Kuru Panchâlas. The Panchâla kingdom probably rose to distinction about the same time as the kingdom of the Kurus, and the Brâhmana literature frequently refers to these allied tribes as forming the very centre of the Hindu world, and renowned by their valour, their learning, and their civilization. Many of the Brâhmanas allude to the culture of their schools (Parishads), the sanctity of their priests, the ostentatious religious sacrifices of their kings, and the exemplary lives of the people.

For centuries had elapsed since the Aryans had first settled on the banks of the Indus, and the centuries had done their work in progress and civilization. The Kurus and the Panchâlas were no longer like the warrior-cultivators who battled against the black aborigines and won the banks of the Indus and its tributaries. Manners had changed, society had become more refined and polished, learning and arts had made considerable progress. Kings invited wise men in their polished courts, held learned controversies with their priests, performed elaborate sacrifices according to the dictates of religion, led respectable and trained armies to the field, appointed duly qualified men to collect taxes and to administer justice, and performed all the duties of civilized administrators. The relations and friends of the king and all the warriors of the nation

learnt archery and riding and driving the war chariot from their early youth, and also learned the Vedas and all the holy learning that was handed down from generation to generation. The priests multiplied religious rites and observances, preserved the traditional learning of the land, and instructed and helped the people in their religious duties. And the people lived in their towns and villages, cherished the sacred sacrificial fire in their houses, cultivated the arts of peace, trained their boys from early youth in the Vedas and in their social and religious duties, and gradually developed those social customs which in India have force of laws. Women had their legitimate influence in society, and moved without restriction or restraint. Society in India, fourteen hundred years before Christ, was more polished and refined than that of the preceding Vedic Age, and had more of healthy life and vigour than Hindu society has had in succeeding ages.

Civilization, however, does not necessarily put a stop to wars and dissensions; and of the political history of the Kurus and the Panchâlas, the only reminiscences we possess are those of a sanguinary war in which many neighbouring tribes took part, and which form the subject of one of the two great epics of India. There is a passage in the 13th book of the Satapatha Brâhmana in which Bhârata the son of Duhshanta and Sakuntalâ, Dhritarâshtra the king of the Kâsîs, and Janamejaya Pârikshita and his three brothers Bhîma-

sena, Ugrasena and Srautasena are named, *and these last are absolved by a horse-sacrifice from all guilt, all Brahmahatyâ.* Again, in the 14th Book we find an account of a discussion between Yâjnavalkya and his rivals in Janaka's court, and one of the questions put to Yâjnavalkya by one of his rivals is, "*Whither have the Pârikshitas gone?*" *and Yâjnavalkya answers,* "*Thither where all Asvamedha Sacrificers go.*"

Professor Weber's remarks on these passages are worthy of reflection. He says: "The Pârikshitas must at that time have been altogether extinct. Yet their life and end must have been still fresh in the memory of the people, and a subject of general curiosity. It almost seems as though their guilt, their *Brahmahatyâ* had been too great for the people to believe that it could have been atoned for by sacrifices, were they ever so holy."*

On the whole, Professor Weber adopts Lassen's view that there was a destructive conflict between the Kurus and the Panchâlas, and that this feud is the leading and central fact round which the stories of the great epic Mahâbhârata have since grown. Professor Weber further maintains that this war must have taken place after the Satapatha Brâhmana had been commenced and before the final books of that work were written. For in the earlier books of the Brâhmana, "we find the

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* *Indian Literature* (translation), p. 126.

Kurus and the Panchâlas still in full prosperity, and also united in the closest bonds of friendship as one people. Consequently, this internecine strife cannot have taken place. On the other hand, in the latest portions of the Brâhmana, we find the prosperity, the sin, the expiation, and the fall of Janamejaya Pârikshita and his brothers Bhîmasena, Ugrasena and Srautasena, and of the whole family of the Pârikshitas, apparently still fresh in the memory of the people and discussed as a subject of controversy." *

Without assenting to the inference that the Satapatha Brâhmana was commenced before the war, we think there can be little doubt as to the war itself in which the Kurus, the Panchâlas, and other races were engaged. There can be as little doubt that this war was the subject of the Mahâbhârata in its original shape, and that this original Mahâbhârata began to be composed within a few centuries after the war, probably within the Epic Period. The name of Mahâbhârata occurs in Âsvalâyana's Grihya Sûtra, and scholars like Max Müller, Goldstücker, and Weber agree in maintaining that the original Mahâbhârata existed in Âsvalâyana's time, *i. e.*, in the Rationalistic Age which immediately followed the Epic Period.

What a historical treasure, what an invaluable record of the manners and customs and annals of the Epic

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* *Indian Literature* (translation), p. 135.

Period we have lost in that original Epic of India. Where is the Indian historian who would not willingly sacrifice one-half of the voluminous later literature of the Paurânik Period to get this single work back again in its integrity? But this may not be. Every later poet and editor has contributed his mite towards enlarging altering and distorting the ancient epic; every new sect has been careful to incorporate its new-fangled tenets in this national work, and Krishna-worship which is of later origin, has been bodily transplanted into the ancient narrative of the Kuru-Panchâla war!

As a historical narrative of the principal incidents of the war, the present epic is utterly valueless. For the events and incidents have been changed, and the names of the heroes are later interpolations. The very geography of the ancient work has been changed. Sahadeva in the existing epic travels as far south as Mysore and Ceylon, which countries it is needless to state were unknown to the Hindus at the time when the war was waged.

The heroes of the existing epic are the five sons of Pându, called the Pândavas, and these heroes are myths and later interpolations. The literature of the time which makes frequent mention of Janamejaya Pârikshita and numerous other kings of the time, has not a word to say about the Pândavas who are entirely unknown to Ancient Sanskrit literature! In the Buddhist work, Lalita Vistâra, the Pândavas are described as a wild mountain

tribe; but if so, how do they come to be enrolled as heroes in a war among Aryan nations? We will not try to conjecture an answer.

The five heroes of the existing epic are myths pure and simple. Yudhisthira, the eldest, represents virtue; Bhîma, the second, represents untrained valour; Arjuna, the third, represents skill in war; and the other two brothers similarly represent distinct qualities. It is remarkable that in the Epic Period when the war took place, Arjuna was still a name of Indra, and Indra's Vedic combats with the rain cloud have thus been mixed up with the facts of a historical war! To take one more instance, Janamejaya Pârikshita was, according to contemporaneous testimony, himself stained with the guilt of the war. In the modern epic, Janamejaya is the great grandson of Arjuna who was engaged in the war.

And if the heroes of the modern epic are mythical, the heroine is still more so. Draupadî the daughter of the king of the Panchâlas, marries the Pândavas in the modern epic,—yes, marries all five of them! And yet polyandry was not only unknown to the Hindus at the time of the Kurus and the Panchâlas, but that barbarous custom was not known to the Indo-Aryans in any age or period within the four thousand years of their history. We know enough of the manners of the polished court of the Panchâlas to be able to boldly assert that the king of that race would not have given his daughter to *five*

husbands, to save his empire or even his head! Draupadî is only a myth, or perhaps an allegory representing the alliance of the Panchâla king with a party to the war.

Thus the existing epic is utterly valueless as a record of the incidents and characters of the real war. Nevertheless this work, so changed and altered, has a unique value as a record of the manners and civilization of the ancient time. The generations of authors who have tampered with this ancient epic, who have been assiduous in altering characters and incidents, in preaching new cults and amassing ancient and modern legends, have not had the time or the motive to wipe out many a lifelike picture of the manners of the Kurus and the Panchâlas which has been preserved to us. We still see in this venerable volume how the Hindus lived and fought, acted and felt, three thousand years ago. We find how young princes were early trained to arms, and how Kuru mothers and sisters and wives came out in public and witnessed with pride the tournaments in which their sons and brothers and husbands distinguished themselves! We find how girls married at an advanced age, and princesses famed for their beauty often selected their husbands among the princes who came to seek their hands. We find how jealousies among kings broke out into sanguinary wars, and how the bitterness of such feuds was restrained by the laws of chivalry. Victors in such wars performed

the great horse-sacrifice, and all the princes of the Hindu world were invited to those grand imperial festivities.

It is because the story of the existing epic throws such valuable side lights on the state of the society of the ancient Hindus that we think it necessary to briefly narrate it here. Let the reader attach no value to the names which are mostly myths, or to the incidents which are mostly imaginary ; let him only endeavour to draw from it a picture of Hindu life in the Epic Period, *i. e.*, the period of Aryan expansion in the Gangetic Valley.

The capital of the Kurus at the time of which we are speaking was the city of Hastinâpura, the supposed ruins of which have been discovered on the upper course of the Ganges about 65 miles to the north-east of Delhi. Sântanu the old king of Hastinâpura, died, leaving two sons, Bhîshma who had taken a vow of celêbacy, and a younger prince who became king. This young prince died in his turn, leaving two sons, Dhritarâshtra the blind, and Pându who ascended the throne.

Pându died, leaving five sons who are the heroes of the epic. Dhritarâshtra remained virtually the king during the minority of the five Pândavas and of his own children, while Dhritarâshtra's uncle Bhîshma, a renowned warrior, remained the chief councillor and friend of the state.

The account of the training of the young Pândavas and the sons of Dhritarâshtra to arms throws much

light on the manners of royal houses. Drona was a Brâhman, and a renowned warrior, for caste had not yet completely formed itself, Kshatriyas had not yet obtained the monopoly of the use of arms, nor Brâhmans of religious learning. He had been insulted by his former friend the king of the Panchâlas, and had retired in disgust to the court of the Kurus and undertook to train the princes in arms.

Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pândavas, never became much of a warrior, but became versed in the religious learning of the age, and is the most righteous character in the epic. Bhîma, the second, learnt to use the club, and was renowned for his gigantic size and giant strength, and is indeed the Hercules of the poem. The third Pândava Arjuna excelled all other princes in the skill of arms, and aroused the jealousy and hatred of the sons of Dhritarâshtra, even in their boyhood. Nakula, the fourth, learned to tame horses, and Sahadeva became proficient in astronomy. Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhritarâshtra, was proficient in the use of the club, and was a rival to Bhîma.

At last the day came for a public exhibition of the proficiency which the princes had acquired in the use of arms. A spacious area was enclosed. Seats were arranged all round for the accommodation of ancient warriors and chieftains, of ladies and courtiers. The whole population of the Kuruland flocked to see the skill of their young princes. The blind king Dhrita-

râshtra was led to his seat; and foremost among the ladies was Gândhârî, the queen of Dhritarâshtra, and Kuntî, the mother of the first three Pândavas. The last two were Pându's sons by another wife.

There was shooting of arrows at a butt, and there was fight with swords and bucklers and clubs. Duryodhana and Bhîma soon began to fight in right earnest, and rushed towards each other like mad elephants. Shouts ascended to sky, and soon the fight threatened to have a tragic end. At last the infuriated young men were parted, and peace was restored.

Then the young Arjuna entered the lists in golden mail, with his wondrous bow. His splendid archery surprised his most passionate admirers and thrilled the heart of his mother with joy, while shouts of admiration rose from the multitude like the roar of the ocean. He played with his sword which flashed like lightning, and also with his sharp-edged quoit or chakra and never missed his mark. Lastly, he brought down horses and deer to the ground by his noose, and concluded by doing obeisance to his worthy preceptor Drona, amidst the ringing cheers of the assembled multitude.

The dark cloud of jealousy lowered on the brow of Dhritarâshtra's sons, and soon they brought to the field an unknown warrior Karna who was a match for Arjuna in archery. King's sons could only fight with their peers like the knights of old, and Dhritarâshtra

therefore knighted the unknown warrior, or rather made him a king, on the spot, so that Arjuna might have no excuse for declining the fight. To awkward questions which were put to him, the haughty Karna replied that rivers and warriors knew not of their origin and birth,—their prowess was their genealogy. But the Pândavas declined the fight, and the haughty Karna retired in silence and in rage.

Drona now demanded the reward of his tuition. Like doughty warriors of old he held revenge to be the dearest joy of a warrior, and for his reward he asked the help of the Kurus to be revenged on Draupada, king of the Panchâlas, who had insulted him. The demand could not be refused. Drona marched against Draupada, conquered him and wrested half his kingdom. Draupada swore to be avenged.

Dark clouds now arose on the horizon of Kuru land. The time had come for Dhritarâshtra to name a Yuvarâja,—or a prince who would reign during his old age. The claim of Yudhisthira to the throne of his father could not be gainsaid, and he was appointed Yuvarâja. But the proud Duryodhana rebelled against the arrangement, and the old monarch had to yield, and sent the five Pândavas in exile to Vâranâvata, said to be the modern Allahabad, and then the very frontier of Hindu settlements. The vengeance of Duryodhana pursued them there, and the house where the Pândavas lived was burnt to ashes. The Pândavas and their

mother escaped by an underground passage, and for a long time roamed about disguised as Brâhmans.

Heralds now went from country to country, and proclaimed in all lands that the daughter of Drupada, king of the Panchâlas, was to choose for herself a husband among the most skilful warriors of the time. As usual on such occasions of *Svayamvara*, or self-choice of a husband by a princess, all the great kings and princes and warriors of the land flocked to the court of Drupada,—each hoping to win the lovely bride who had already attained her youth and was renowned for her beauty. She was to give her hand to the most skilful archer, and the trial ordained was a pretty severe one. A heavy bow of great size was to be wielded, and an arrow was to be shot through a whirling chakra or quoit into the eye of a golden fish, set high on the top of a pole!

Not only princes and warriors, but multitudes of spectators flocked from all parts of the country to Kâmpilya, the capital of the Panchâlas. The princes thronged the seats, and Brâhmans filled the place with Vedic Hymns. Then appeared Draupadî with the garland in her hand which she was to offer to the victor of the day. By her appeared her brother, Dhrishtadyumna who proclaimed the feat which was to be performed.

Kings rose and tried to wield the bow, one after another, but in vain. The skilful and proud Karna

stepped forth to do the feat, but was prevented from doing it.

A Brâhman suddenly rose and drew the bow, and shot the arrow through the whirling chakra into the eye of the golden fish. A shout of acclamation arose! And Draupadî, the Kshatriya princess, threw the garland round the neck of the brave Brâhman who led her away as bride. But murmurs of discontent arose like the sound of troubled waters from the Kshatriya ranks at this victory of a Brâhman, and the humiliation of the warriors; and they gathered round the bride's father and threatened violence. The Pândavas now threw off their disguise, and the victor of the day proclaimed himself to be Arjuna, a true born Kshatriya!

Then follows the strange myth that the Pândavas went back to their mother and said, a great prize had been won. Their mother, not knowing what the prize was, told her sons to share it among them. And as a mother's mandate cannot be disregarded, the five brothers wedded Draupadî as their wife. It is needless to say that the story and Draupadî herself and of the five Pândavas is an allegory. The Pândavas now formed an alliance with the powerful king of the Panchâlas, and forced the blind king Dhritarâshtra to divide the Kuru land between his sons and the Pândavas. The division, however, was unequal; the fertile tract between the Ganges and the Jumna was retained by the sons of Dhritarâshtra, while the uncleared jungle in the

west was given to the Pândavas. The jungle Khândava Prastha was soon cleared by fire, and a new capital called Indraprastha was built,—the supposed ruins of which are shewn to every modern visitor to Delhi.

Military expeditions were now undertaken by the Pândavas on all sides, but these need not detain us, specially as the accounts of these distant expeditions are very modern interpolations. The scene of action of the Kurus and the Panchâlas was the Doab, and the country beyond the basin of the Ganges and the Jumna was yet almost unknown to Hindus.

We do not even hear that the Kosalas and the Videhas took any active part in the Kuru-Panchâla war, and this shews that Oude and North Behar, if already colonized by Aryans, had not risen to power and fame. When therefore we find in the Mahâbhârata accounts of expeditions to Ceylon, to Bengal, to Dvârikâ in Guzerat, we may unhesitatingly put them down as later interpolations.

And now Yudhishthira was to celebrate the Râjasûya or coronation ceremony, and all the princes of the land, including his kinsmen of Hastinâpura, were invited. The place of honor was given to Krishna, king of Dvârikâ in Guzerat; but Sisupâla of Chedi violently protested, and Krishna killed him on the spot. The whole story of Krishna,—a deity and a king,—appears to us to be a very modern interpolation.

The tumult having subsided, the consecrated water

was sprinkled on the newly-created monarch, and Brâhmans went away loaded with presents.

But the newly-created king was not long to enjoy his kingdom. With all his righteouness, Yudhishthira had a weakness for gambling, like the other chiefs of the time, and the unforgiving and jealous Duryodhana challenged him to a game. Kingdom, wealth, himself, and his brothers, and even his wife were staked and lost,—and behold now, the five brothers and Draupadî the slaves of Duryodhana! The proud Draupadî refused to submit to her position, but Duhsâsana dragged her to the assembly-room by her hair, and Duryodhana forced her down on his knee in the sight of the stupified assembly. The blood of the Pândavas and the other chieftains was rising, when the old Dhritarâshtra was led to the assembly-room and stopped a tumult. It was decided that the Pândavas had lost their kingdom, but should not be slaves. They agreed to go in exile for twelve years, after which they should remain concealed for a year. If the sons of Dhritarâshtra failed to discover them during the year, they would get back their kingdom.

Thus the Pândavas again went in exile; and, after twelve years of wanderings in various places, disguised themselves in the thirteenth year and took service under the king of Virâta. Yudhishthira was to teach the king gambling; Bhîma was the head cook; Arjuna was to teach dancing and music to the king's daughter,

Nakula and Sahadeva were to be master of horse and master of cattle respectively, and Draupadî was to be the queen's hand-maid. A difficulty arose. The queen's brother was enamoured of the new attendant of superb beauty, and insulted her and was resolved to possess her. Bhîma interfered and killed the lover in secret.

Cattle-lifting was not uncommon among princes of those days, and the princes of Hastinâpura carried away some cattle from Virâta. Arjuna, the dancing master, could stand this no longer, he put on his armour, drove out in chariot, and recovered the cattle, but was discovered! The question whether the year of secret exile had quite expired was never settled.

And now the Pândavas sent an envoy to Hastinâpura to claim back their kingdom. The claim was refused, and both parties prepared for a war, the like of which had never been seen in India. All the princes of note joined one side or the other, and the battle which was fought in the plains of Kurukshetra, north of Delhi, lasted for 18 days, and ended in a fearful slaughter and carnage.

The long story of the battle with its endless episodes need not detain us. Arjuna killed the ancient Bhîshma unfairly, after that chief was forced to desist from fighting. Drona, with his impenetrable "squares" or phalanxes, killed his old rival Drupada, but Drupada's son revenged his father's death and killed Drona unfairly. Bhîma met Duhsâsana who had insulted Draupadî in

the gambling room, cut off his head, and in fierce vindictiveness drank his blood! Lastly, there was the crowning contest between Karna and Arjuna who had hated each other through life; and Arjuna killed Karna unfairly when his chariot wheels sank into the earth, and he could not move or fight. On the last or eighteenth day, Duryodhana fled from Bhîma, but was compelled by taunts and rebukes to turn round and fight, and Bhîma by a foul blow (because struck below the waist) smashed the knee on which Duryodhana had once dragged Draupadî. And the wounded warrior was left there to die. The bloodshed was not yet over, for Drona's son made a midnight raid into the enemy's camp and killed Drupada's son, and thus an ancient feud was quenched in blood.

The remainder of the story is soon told. The Pândavas went to Hastinâpura, and Yudhishthira became king. He is said to have subdued every king in Aryan India, and at last celebrated the Asvamedha ceremony or the Imperial horse-sacrifice. A horse was let loose and wandered at its will for a year, and no king dared to stop it. This was a sign of submission of all the surrounding kings, and they were then invited to the great horse-sacrifice. We have seen that in the Vedic times the horse was sacrificed simply for eating; in the Epic Period the horse-sacrifice became a means of expiation of sin, and of the assumption of the Imperial title.

Such is the story of the great Epic divested of its

numerous legends and episodes, its supernatural incidents and digressions. Krishna, the Island-born, compiler of the Vedas (not Krishna, the king of Dvârikâ), is said to have been the son of the unmarried girl who afterwards married Sântanu. He was therefore half brother of Bhîshma. He often appears on the scene abruptly and in a supernatural manner, and imparts instruction and advice. The story has a historical interest, and shews that the three ancient Vedas were compiled before the time of the Kuru-Panchâla war.

For the rest, it will appear from the above brief account that the first Hindu colonists of the Gangetic valley had not yet lost the sturdy valour and the stubborn warlike determination of the preceding Vedic Age. Kings now ruled over larger countries and peoples, manners were more polished, the rules of social life and of chivalry were more highly developed, and the science of war itself was better organized. But nevertheless the stern and relentless determination of the Vedic warriors to quell the foe breaks through the polished manners of the Kurus and the Panchâlas, and those nations, if they had gained in civilization, had scarcely yet lost much in the vigour of national life. How imperfectly the caste-system flourished among these sturdy races is shewn by many facts which still loom out in bold outline amidst the interpolations and additions of later writers. Sântanu, the ancient

king of Hastinâpura, had a brother Devâpi, who was a priest. The most learned character in the epic, Yudhishthira, is a Kshatriya, and the most skilful warrior Drona is a Brâhman. And the venerable compiler of the Vedas, Krishna Dvaipâyana himself—was he a Brâhman or a Kshatriya?

CHAPTER III.

VIDEHAS, KOSALAS AND KASIS.

B. C. 1200 TO B. C. 1000.

THE tide of Aryan conquests rolled onward. Soon after the country between the Jumna and the Ganges had been completely conquered, peopled and Hinduized, new bands of adventurous settlers crossed the Ganges and marched further eastwards to found new colonies and new Hindu kingdoms. Stream after stream was crossed, forest after forest was explored and cleared, region after region was slowly conquered, peopled and Hinduized in this onward march towards the unknown east. The history of the long struggles and the gradual development of the Hindu power in these regions has been lost to us; and we only see, in the literature which has been preserved, the establishment of powerful and civilized Hindu kingdoms east of the Ganges,—the kingdom of the Kosalas in the country known as modern Oude, of the Videhas in North Behar, and of the Kâsîs in the country round modern Benares.

Some recollections of this eastern march has been preserved in stray passages, and attention was directed

many years ago by Professor Weber to one such passage in the Satapatha Brâhmana.

"10. Mâdhava the Videgha carried Agni Vaisvânara in his mouth. The Rishi Gotama Râhûgana was his family priest. When addressed (by the latter) he made no answer fearing lest Agni might fall from his mouth.

"13. Still he did not answer. (The priest continued): 'Thee O butter sprinkled one, we invoke!' (Rig Veda V, 26, 2.) So much he uttered when, at the very mentioning of butter, Agni Vaisvânara flashed forth from the king's mouth; he was unable to hold him back; he issued from his mouth and fell down on this earth.

"14. Mâdhava the Videgha was at that time on the (river) Sarasvatî. He (Agni) thence went burning along this earth towards the east; and Gotama Râhûgana and the Videgha Mâdhava followed after him as he was burning along. He burnt over (dried up) all these rivers. Now that (river) which is called Sadânîra (Gunduck river) flows from the northern (Himâlaya) mountain: that one he did not burn over. That one the Brâhmans did not cross in former times, thinking it has not been burnt over by Agni Vaisvânara.

"15. Now-a-days, however, there are many Brâhmans to the east of it. At that time it (the land east of the Sadânîra) was very uncultivated, very marshy, because it had not been tasted by Agni Vaisvânara.

"16. Now-a-days, however, it is very cultivated, for the Brâhmans have caused (Agni) to taste it through

sacrifices. Even in late summer that (river), as it were, rages along; so cold it is, not having been burnt over by Agni Vaisvânara.

"17. Mâdhava the Videgha then said (to Agni), 'Where am I to abide?' 'To the east of this (river) be thy abode!' said he. Even now this river forms the boundary of the Kosalas and Videhas; for these are the Mâdhavas (or descendants of Mâdhava)." (Satapatha Brâhmana, I, 4, 1.)

Here then we have an account, in a legendary form, of the gradual march of the colonists from the banks of the Sarasvatî eastwards until they came to the Gunduck. That river formed the boundary between the two kingdoms; the Kosalas lived to the west of it, and the Videhas to the east of it.

In course of years, probably of centuries, the kingdom of the Videhas rose in power and in civilization, until it became the most prominent kingdom in Northern India.

Janaka, king of the Videhas, is probably the most prominent figure in the history of the Epic Period in India! That monarch had not only established his power in the farthest confines of the Hindu dominions in India, but he gathered round him the most learned men of his time; he entered into discussion with them, and instructed them in holy truths about the Universal Being. It is this that has surrounded the name of Janaka with undying glory. King Ajâtasatru of the

Kâsîs, himself a learned man and a most renowned patron of learning, exclaimed in despair, "Verily, all people run away, saying, Janaka is our patron!" (Brihadâranyaka Upanishad, II, 1, 1.)

The great fame of Janaka is partly owing to the culture and learning of the chief priest of his court Yâjnavalyka Vâjasaneyin. Under the royal auspices of Janaka this priest probably conceived the bold conception of revising the Yajur Veda as it then existed, of separating the formulas from the exegetic matter, of condensing the former in the shape of a new Yajur Veda (the White Yajur Veda known as the Vâjasaneyi Veda), and of amplifying the latter into a vast body of Brâhmana known as the Satapatha Brâhmana. Generations of priests laboured at this stupendous work, but the glory of starting the work belongs to the founder of the school, Yâjnavalkya Vâjasaneyin and his learned patron, King Janaka of the Videhas.

But Janaka has a still higher claim to our respect and admiration. While the priestly caste was still multiplying rituals and supplying dogmatic and ridiculous explanations for each rite, the royal caste seems to have felt some impatience at priestly supremacy and pedantry, and also at the ridiculous dogmas which were so authoritatively preached. Thinking and earnest Kshatriyas must have asked themselves if these rites and dogmas were all that religion could teach. Learned Kshatriyas, while still conforming to the rites laid down by priests,

gave a start to healthier speculations, and inquired about the destination of the human soul and the nature of the Supreme Being. So bold, so healthy and vigorous were these new and earnest speculations, that the priestly classes, who were wise in their own esteem, at last felt their inferiority, and came to Kshatriyas to learn something of the wisdom of the new school. The Upanishads contain the healthy and earnest speculations which were started at the close of the Epic Period; and King Janaka of Videha is honored and respected,— more than any other king of the time,— as an originator of the earnest speculations of the Upanishads.

The teaching of the Upanishads will be dwelt on more fully in a subsequent chapter of this book, but an account of Janaka and of the other kings of the period and their place in Hindu literature will not be complete unless we cite a few passages here, illustrating their relations with their priests, and their labours in the cause of earnest philosophical speculations in India.

"Janaka of Videha once met some Brâhmans who had just arrived. They were Svetaketu Âruneya, Somasushma Satyayajni and Yâjnavalkya. He said to them: 'How do you perform the Agni hotra?'"

The three Brâhmans replied as best they could; but not correctly. Yâjnavalkya came very near the mark, but was not quite correct. Janaka told them so, and mounted his car and went away!

The priests said: "This fellow of a Râjanya has insulted us." Yâjnavalkya mounted his car, followed the king, and had the difficulty explained. (Satapatha Brâhmana, XI, 4, 5.)

We find in Chhândogya Upanishad, V, 3, that one of the three Brâhmans named above, Svetaketu Âruneya came to an assembly of the Panchâlas, and Pravâhana Jaivali a Kshatriya asked him some questions which puzzled him. He came back sorrowful to his father and said: "That fellow of a Râjanya asked me five questions, and I could not answer one of them." The father, Gautama, was himself puzzled and went to the Kshatriya to have his difficulty removed. Pravâhana Jaivali replied: "Gautama, this knowledge did not go to any Brâhman before you, and therefore this teaching belonged in all the worlds to the Kshatra class alone." And then he imparted the knowledge to Gautama.

In another place in this Upanishad (I, 8,) this Pravâhana silenced two boastful Brâhmans and then imparted true knowledge of the Highest Brâhman to them.

A story is told in the Satapatha Brâhmana, X, 6, 1, 1, and is repeated in the Chhândogya Upanishad (V, 11) that five Brâhman householders and theologians became anxious to know, 'What is our Self and what is Brâhman?' They came to Uddâlaka Âruni to obtain the knowledge, but Âruni had his misgivings, and therefore took them to the Kshatriya king Asvapati Kaikeya, who courteously invited them to stay at a sacrifice he

was going to perform. He said: "In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without an altar in his house, no ignorant person, no adulterer, much less an adultress. I am going to perform a sacrifice, Sirs, and as much wealth as I give to each Ritvik priest, I shall give to you, Sirs. Please to stay here."

They stayed and told him what they had come for, and "on the next morning they approached him, carrying fuel in their hands (like students), and he, without any preparatory rites," imparted to them the knowledge they had come for.

It is curious how we meet the same names over and over in the different Upanishads, and often the same story too in different forms, showing that the old recognised Upanishads were composed at much the same time. We find Uddâlaka Âruni, also called Gautama and his son Svetaketu, again in the Kaushîtaki Upanishad; and the father and the son went to Chitra Gângyâyani, fuel in hand, to learn the truth. Chitra, a Kshatriya king, said: "You are worthy of Brâhman O Gautama, because you were not led away by pride. Come hither, I shall make you know clearly." (I, 1.)

A celebrated story is told in the Kaushîtaki Upanishad (IV), of a conversation between Gârgya Bâlâki, a celebrated man of learning, and Ajâtasatru, the learned king of the Kâsîs. The boastful Brâhman challenged the king, but in course of the learned dispute which followed, he collapsed and became silent. Ajâtasatru

said to him: 'Thus far do you know O Bâlâki?' 'Thus far only,' replied Bâlâki. Then Ajâtasatru said to him: 'Vainly did you challenge me, saying, shall I tell you Brâhman?' 'O Bâlâki, He who is the maker of those persons (whom you mentioned), He of whom all this is the work, He alone is to be known.'

"Then Bâlâki came, carrying fuel in his hand, saying: 'May I come to you as a pupil?' Ajâtasatru said to him: 'I deem it improper that a Kshatriya should initiate a Brâhman. Come, I will make you know clearly.'"

This story as well as the story of Svetaketu Âruneya and the Kshatriya King Pravâhana Jaivali are repeated in the Brihadâranyka Upanishad.

There are numerous such passages in the Upanishads in which the Kshatriyas are represented as the wisest teachers and the boldest speculators. But it is needless to multiply instances here. What we have said is enough to indicate the place which belongs to the royal caste at the close of the Epic Period in the history of Hindu religion and philosophy. The Upanishads mark a new era in the history of human knowledge, and this knowledge which dates about 1000 B. C. "did not belong to any Brâhman before," "it belonged in all the worlds to the Kshatra class alone."

These are real claims of Janaka, king of the Videhas to the admiration and gratitude of posterity. Curiously enough, posterity remembers him and the Videhas

and the Kosalas also, through a myth which has clung round their revered names. That myth relates to the Aryan conquest of Southern India; and with a fervid and blind gratitude poets of subsequent ages have connected that great historical event with the names of ancient kings who had nothing to do with the conquest! Historical knowledge in Europe, even in the dark ages, was never so dim as to allow a poet to conjecture the conquest of Jerusalem by Charlemagne or Alfred the Great! But the second great epic of India conceives and describes the conquest of Ceylon by a king of the Kosalas who had married the daughter of Janaka king of the Videhas.

It is not possible with our present knowledge to state when the Râmâyana was composed in its original shape. We find references to the Mahâbhârata in the Sûtra literature, but we find no such reference to the Râmâyana. The discovery and conquest of Ceylon by Vijaya from Bengal took place in the fifth century B. C., and at first sight one would be inclined to refer the first conception of the epic, which has its scene of action in that island, to that date. On the other hand, there is nothing to shew that the existence of the island was utterly unknown before its conquest by Vijaya. It seems on the contrary very probable that the island was darkly known, and believed to be inhabited by monsters and giants for centuries before it was conquered by the Hindus. And the composition of the

Râmâyana, which makes no allusion to Vijaya's conquest, may with greater probability be referred to an age anterior to Vijaya, when the darkness of ignorance and myths still obscured the island from the Hindus.

That this view is more probable appears from the fact that the whole of India, south of the Vindhya chain, is described in the Râmâyana as one interminable forest, inhabited by barbarous aborigines, who are described as monkeys and bears of different kinds. Now we know that the banks of the Godavari and even of the Krishna river were colonized by the Aryans early in the Rationalistic Period, and great empires like that of the Andhras rose to power and started new schools of science and learning several centuries before Christ. The first conception of the Râmâyana must be referred to a period anterior to these movements in the South, for the Râmâyana speaks of no Aryan civilization south of the Vindhyas.

The Râmâyana in its original shape must therefore be referred to a period anterior to the Aryan subjugation of Southern India, and must therefore belong to the close of the period of which we are now speaking, *i. e.*, the Epic Period. What was the original shape of the Râmâyana and what incidents have been bodily added at a later period are questions which we are unable to discuss here.

The Râmâyana then, like the Mahâbhârata, is utterly valueless as a narrative of historical events and inci-

dents. As in the Mahâbhârata, so in the Râmâyana, the heroes are myths, pure and simple.

Sîtâ, the field furrow, had received divine honors from the time of the Rig Veda, and had been worshipped as a goddess. When cultivation gradually spread towards Southern India, it was not difficult to invent a poetical myth that Sîtâ was carried to the South. And when this goddess and woman—the noblest creation of human imagination,—had acquired a distinct and lovely individuality, she was naturally described as the daughter of the holiest and most learned king on record, Janaka of the Videhas!

But who is Râma, described in the epic as Sîtâ's husband and the king of the Kosalas? The later Purânas tell us that he was an incarnation of Vishnu,—but Vishnu himself had not risen to prominence at the time of which we are speaking! Indra was still the chief of the gods of the Epic Period. And in the Sûtra literature (*e.g.*, Pâraskara Grihya Sûtra II, 17, 9.) we learn that Sîtâ, the furrow goddess, is the wife of Indra. Is it then an untenable conjecture that Râma, the hero of the Râmâyana, is in his original conception, like Arjuna, the hero of the Mahâbhârata, only a new edition of Indra of the Rig Veda battling with the demons of drought? The myth of Indra has thus been mixed up with the epic which describes a historic war in Northern India, and the epic which describes the historic conquest of Southern India!

But though the Râmâyana is utterly valueless as a narrative of events, still like the Mahâbhârata it throws side-lights of the state of ancient society in India, and the story of the epic therefore needs be briefly told. Only we must premise that even as a picture of life, the Râmâyana is long posterior to the Mahâbhârata, and belongs (in its first conception) to the very close of the Epic Period. We miss in the Râmâyana the fiery valour and the proud self-assertion of the Kshatriyas of the Mahâbhârata; and the subordination of the people to the priestly caste is more complete. Janaka himself is not described as the proud asserter of Kshatriya learning and dignity that he was, but as a humble servant of the priests. And Râma himself, the hero of the epic, though he encounters and defeats a Brâhman warrior Parasu Râma does so with many apologies and due submission! The story of Parasurâma probably conceals a great historic truth. He is said to have fought against the Kshatriyas and exterminated the caste twenty seven times, and then he was conquered by the Kshatriya Râma, the hero of the epic. It would seem that this story indicates the real rivalry and hostilities between the priestly and warrior castes,—indications of which we have found in a literary form in the Upanishads.

For the rest, one feels on reading the Râmâyana that the real heroic age of India had passed, and that centuries of residence in the Gangetic valley had produced

an enervating effect on the Aryans. We miss the heroic if somewhat rude and sturdy manners and incidents which mark Mahâbhârata. We miss characters distinguished by fiery valour, and battles fought with real obstinacy and determination. We miss men of flesh and blood, and pride and valour and stern determination like Karna and Duryodhana and Bhîma; and the best developed characters in the Râmâya na are women like the proud and scheming Kaikeyî or the gentlé and ever suffering Sîtâ. The heroes of the Râm âyana are somewhat tame and commonplace personages, very respectful to priests, very anxious to conform to the rules of decorum and etiquette, doing a vast amount of fighting work mechanically, but without the determination, the persistence of real fighters! A change had come over the spirit of the nation; and if princes and men had become more polished and law-abiding, they had become less sturdy and heroic. For a picture of Hindu life of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, when the hardy and conquering Kurus and the Panchâlas ruled in the Doab, we would refer our readers to the Mahâbhârata. For a picture of Hindu life of the tenth century when the Kosalas and the Videhas had, by a long residence in the Gangetic valley, become law-abiding and priest-ridden, learned and polished, enervated and dutiful, we would refer our readers to the Râmâyana. The two epics represent the change whieh Hindu life and society underwent

from the commencement to the close of the Epic Age.

We proceed now with the story of the Râmâyana. The people who lived in the wide tract of country between the Ganges and the Gunduck were known by the general name of the Kosalas as we have seen before. Dasaratha, a distinguished king of this nation, had his capital in Ayodhyâ (or Oude), the ruins of which ancient town are still shown to travellers in some shapeless mounds. Dasaratha had three queens honored above the rest, of whom Kausalyâ bore him his eldest born Râma, Kaikeyi was the mother of Bharata, and Sumitrâ of Lakshmana and Satrughna. Dasaratha in his old age decided on making Râma the Yuvarâja or reigning prince, but the proud and beauteous Kaikeyî insisted that her son should be Yuvarâja, and the feeble old king yielded to the determined will of his wife.

Before this Râma had won Sîtâ, the daughter of Janaka, king of the Videhas, at a Svayamvara. Kings and princes had assembled there, but Râma alone could lift the heavy bow, and bent it till it broke in twain. But now, when Ayodhyâ was still ringing with acclamation at the prospect of Râma's being installed as Yuvarâja, it was decided in queen Kaikeyî's chambers that Bharata must be the Yuvarâja, and further that Râma must go in exile for fourteen years.

Râma was too obedient and dutiful to resist or even resent this decision. His faithful half brother

Lakshmana accompanied him, and the gentle Sîtâ would not hear of parting with her lord. Among the tears and lamentation of the people of Ayodhyâ, Râma and Sîtâ and Lakshmaṇa walked out of the city.

The exiles first went to the hermitage of Bhâradvâja in Prayaga (Allahabad), and then to that of Vâlmîki in Chitrakûta, somewhere in modern Bandelkund. Vâlmîki is reputed to be the author of the epic Râmâyana just as Krishna Dvaipâyana Vyâsa, the compiler of the Vedas is said to be the author of the Mahâbhârata. There is as little truth in the one tradition as in the other. Dasaratha died of broken heart on the departure of Râma.

Bharata followed Râma to Chitrakûta and informed him of their father's death and implored his return. But Râma felt himself bound by the promise he had made, and it was agreed that Râma would return after fourteen years and ascend the throne. Bharata returned to Ayodhyâ.

Leaving Chitrakûta, Râma wandered in the Dandaka forest and towards the sources of the Godâvarî among jungles and non-Aryan tribes. For Southern India had not yet been colonized by Aryans. Thirteen years thus passed away.

Râvana, the monster king of Lankâ or Ceylon and of Southern India, heard of the beauty of Sîtâ now dwelling in jungles, and in the absence of Râma took her away from their hut, and carried her off to Ceylon.

Râma, after a long search, obtained clue of her; he made alliances with the non-Aryan tribes of Southern India who are described as monkeys and bears, and made preparations for crossing over to Ceylon to recover his wife.

Bâli was a great king among the non-Aryans, but his brother Sugrîva thirsted after his kingdom and his wife, and Râma faught and killed Bâli; helped Sugrîva to win the kingdom and Bâli's widow; and Sugrîva then marched with his army to Lanka.

Hanumat, the commander-in-chief of the non-Aryan or monkey army, led the way. He leaped over the strait of sixty miles which separates India from Ceylon, found Sîtâ and gave her the ring sent by Râma, caused a conflagration in the capital of Râvana, and then returned to Râma.

A causeway was then built across the strait by boulders and stones. The reader is aware that a natural causeway runs nearly across the strait, and there is no doubt that the physical geography of this locality suggested to the poet the idea that the causeway was built by the superhuman labours of Râma's monkey army. The whole army then crossed over and laid siege to the capital of Râvana.

The account of the war which follows, though full of poetical incidents and stirring description, is unnatural and tedious. Chief after chief was sent out by Râvana to beat back the invaders, but they all fell in the war,

Râma using his supernatural weapons and mystic mantras. Indrajit, the proud son of Râvana, battled from the clouds, but Lakshmana killed him. Râvana came out in rage and killed Lakshmana, but the dead hero revived under the influence of some medicine brought by the faithful Hanumat. One of Râvana's brothers, Bibhîsana, had turned a traitor, and had joined Râma, and told him the secret by which each warrior would be killed, and thus chief after chief of Râvana's proud host fell. At last Râvana himself came out, and was killed by Râma. Sîtâ was recovered, but she had to prove her untainted virtue by throwing herself into a lighted pyre, and then coming out of it uninjured.

The fourteenth year of exile being now accomplished, Râma and Sîtâ returned to Ayodhyâ and ascended the throne. But the suspicions of the people fell on Sîtâ who had been in Râvana's house, and could not, they thought, have returned untainted. And Râma, as weak as his father had been, sent poor, suffering Sîtâ —then gone with child,—to exile.

Vâlmîki received her at Chitrakûta, and then her two sons, Lava and Kusa, were born. Vâlmîki composed the poem of the Râmâyana and taught the boys to repeat the piece, and thus years were passed.

Then Râma decided to celebrate the Asvamedha sacrifice, and sent out the horse. The animal came as far as Vâlmîki's hermitage and the boys in a playful humour caught it and detained it. Râma's troops tried in

vain to recover the animal. At last Râma himself saw the princely boys but did not know who they were ; he heard the poem Râmâyana chanted by them, and it was in a passion of grief and regret that he at last knew them and embraced them as his own dear boys.

But there was no joy in store for Sîtâ. The people's suspicions could not be allayed, and Râma was too weak to act against his people. The earth which had given poor Sîtâ birth yawned and received its long suffering child. To this day Hindus hesitate to call their female children by the name of Sîtâ ; for if her gentleness, her virtue, her patient uncomplaining faithfulness and her unconquerable love for her lord was more than human, her sufferings and woes too were more than usually falls to the lot of woman. There is not a Hindu woman in the length and breadth of India to whom the story of suffering Sîtâ is not known, and to whom her character is not a model to strive after and to imitate. And Râma too, though scarcely equal to Sîtâ in the worth of character, has been a model to men for his faithfulness, his obedience and his piety. And thus the epic has been for the millions of India a means of moral education, the value of which can hardly be over-estimated.

CHAPTER IV.

BELT OF NON-ARYAN TRIBES.

THE great river system of Northern India determined the course of Aryan conquests; when we survey the course of these rivers, we comprehend the history of Aryan conquests during ten centuries. And when we have traced the course of the Indus and its tributaries and of the Ganges and the Jumna as far as Benares and North-Behar, we have seen the whole extent of Indo-Aryan world as it existed at the close of the Epic Period, or about 1000 B. C. Beyond this wide tract of Hindu kingdoms lay the whole extent of India yet unexplored or rather unconquered by the Aryans and peopled by various aboriginal tribes. A wide belt of this Non-Aryan tract, surrounding the Hindu world to the east, south and west was becoming known to the Hindus about the very close of the Epic Period. South Behar, Malwa and a portion of the Deccan and the regions near Guzerat and to the south of the Rajputana desert, formed a wide semi-circular belt of country, as yet not Hinduized, but becoming gradually known to the Hindus, and therefore finding occasional mention in latest works of the Brâhmana literature, as regions peopled by *Satvas*, *i.e.*, living creatures, hardly

human beings. We can imagine hardy colonists penetrating into this encircling belt of unknown and uncivilized regions, obtaining a mastery over the aborigines wherever they went, establishing some insolated settlements on the banks of fertile rivers, and presenting to the astonished barbarians some of the results of civilized administration and civilized life. We can imagine also saintly anchorites retiring into these wild jungles, and fringing the tops of hills or fertile valleys with their holy hermitages, which were the seats of learning and of sanctity. And lastly adventurous royal huntsmen not unoften penetrated into these jungles, and unhappy princes exiled by their more powerful rivals often chose to retire from the world and took up their abodes in these solitudes. In such manner was the belt of Non-Aryan country described above, gradually known to the Hindus, and we will cite a passage or two which will shew how far this knowledge extended, and how the civilized Hindus named the different aboriginal tribes dwelling in this tract, probably in the tenth century, B. C.

There is a passage in the last book of the Aitáreya Brâhmana which, along with an account of the principal Hindu kingdoms of the time, makes some mention of aboriginal races in the south and south-west; and the passage deserves to be quoted.

"The Vâsavas then inaugurated him (Indra) in the eastern direction during thirty-one days by these three

Rik verses, the Yajus verse, and the great words (all just mentioned), for the sake of obtaining universal sovereignty. Hence all kings of eastern nations are inaugurated to universal sovereignty and called *Samrâj*, *i.e.*, universal sovereign, after this precedent made by the gods.

"Then the Rudras inaugurated Indra in the southern region during thirty-one days, with the three Rik verses, the Yajus, and the great words (just mentioned), for obtaining enjoyment of pleasures. Hence all kings of living creatures * in the southern region, are inaugurated for the enjoyment (of pleasures) and called *Bhoja*, *i.e.*, the enjoyer.

Then the divine Âdityas inaugurated him in the western region during thirty-one days, with those three Rik verses, that Yajus verse, and those great words for obtaining independent rule. Hence all kings of the *Nîchyas* and *Apâchyas* in the western countries † are inaugurated to independent rule, and called 'independent rulers.' ‡

"Then the Visvedevâh inaugurated him during thirty-one days in the northern region by those three Rik verses, &c., for distinguished rule. Hence all people living in northern countries beyond the Himalaya, such

* *Satvânâm* is the word in the original.

† *Pratîchyâm* is the word in the original.

‡ *Svarât* is the word in the original, whence *Saurâshtra* and Surat.

as the *Uttara Kurus, Uttara Mâdras*, are inaugurated for living without a king (*Vairâjyam*), and called *Virâj*, *i.e.*, without king.

"Then the divine Sâdhyas and Aptyas inaugurated Indra during thirty-one days in the middle region, which is a firmly established footing (the immoveable centre) to the kingship (*Râjya*). Hence the kings of the *Kuru Panchâlas* with the *Vasas* and *Usînaras* are inaugurated to kingship and called kings (Râja)."

This passage shows us at one glance the whole of the Hindu world as it existed in the close of the Epic Period. To the farthest east lived the Videhas and the Kâsîs and the Kosalas as we have seen before, and those newest and youngest of the Hindu colonists excelled in learning and reputation their elder brethren in the west. Their kings, Janaka and Ajâtasatru and others, took the proud title of *Samrâj*, and worthily maintained their dignity by their learning and their prowess.

In the south, some bands of the Aryan settlers must have worked their way up the valley of the Chumbal, and become acquainted with the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the country now known as Malwa. These tribes were called *Satvas*, *i.e.*, living creatures, scarcely human beings! We note however that the kingdoms in this direction already went by the name of *Bhoja* (however fanciful the derivation which the author gives to the word), and *Bhoja* was in later time the name of

the same region, immediately to the north of the Vindhya chain, and along the valley of the Chumbal.

Westwards from this place surged the waves of Aryan settlers or adventurers, until the invaders came to the shores of the Arabian sea, and could proceed no further. The aboriginal races in these distant tracts were looked upon with same degree of contempt by the civilized colonists or invaders and were significantly called *Nîchyas* and *Apâchyas*, and their rulers had the significant name of *Svarât* or independent rulers.

These races dimly known at the very close of the Epic Period were the ancestors of the proudest and most warlike Hindu tribes of later times, *viz.*, the Mahârattas. Surat and Guzerat were named after the same race-name.

To the north the Uttara Kurus and the Uttara Mâdras and other tribes lived—beyond the Himalaya we are told—but which probably means beyond the lower ranges and among the valleys of the Himalayas.

To the present day these men live in communes, and have very little concern with chief or king; and it is no wonder that in ancient times they should be known as peoples without kings.

And then, in the very centre of the Hindu world, along the valley of the Ganges, lived the powerful tribes of the Kurus and the Panchâlas, and the less known tribes, the Vasas and the Usînaras.

In the west, the deserts of Rajputana were wholly unexplored by the Aryans. The Bhil aborigines of those deserts and mountains were left undisturbed until new and hardy tribes of invaders entered India after the Christian era and settled down in these parts.

In the far east, south Behar was not yet Hinduized. In a passage in the Atharva Veda pointed out by Professor Weber, special and hostile notice is taken of the Angas and the Magadhas. The passage shews that the people of south Behar did not yet belong to the Hindu confederation of nations; but were nevertheless becoming known to the Aryans. Bengal Proper was as yet simply unknown.

And the whole of southern India, *i.e.*, India south of the Vindhya range, was yet unoccupied by the Hindus. The Aitareya Brâhmana gives (VII, 18,) the names of certain degraded barbarous tribes, and among others that of the Andhras. We will see that in the Rationalistic Period the Andhras rose to be a great civilized Hindu power in Southern India.

We have now spoken of all the principal Aryan races and kingdoms which flourished in the Epic Period, and of the Non-Aryan kingdoms which formed a semicircular belt in the south of the Hindu world. It will be our pleasanter task in the following chapters to give some account of the social customs and the domestic life of the people. But before we take leave of kings, we must make some mention of the great coro-

nation ceremony, as it has been described in many works of the Epic Period. This ceremony and the imperial horse-sacrifice were the most imposing and ostentatious royal ceremonials of Ancient India, and we have already said something of the horse-sacrifice in connection with the two Epics of the Hindus. An extract or two about the coronation ceremony are all that is needed here.

"He spreads the tiger skin on the throne in such a manner that the hairs come outside and that part which covered the neck is turned eastward. For the tiger is the Kshattra (royal power) of the beasts in the forests. The Kshattra is the royal prince; by means of this Kshattra, the king makes his Kshattra (royal power) prosper. The king, when taking his seat on the throne, approaches it from behind, turning his face eastwards, kneels down with crossed legs, so that his right knee touches the earth, and holding the throne with his hands, prays over it the following mantra:—

"May Agni ascend thee, O throne, with the Gâyatrî Metre, &c.

* * * * * *

"They now put the branch of the udambara tree on the head of the Kshattriya, and pour the liquids (which are in the large ladle) on it. (When doing so) the priest repeats the following mantras:—

'With these waters which are happy, which cure every thing, increase the royal power, the immortal Prajâpati sprinkled Indra, Soma the king, Varuna, Yama Manu,

with the same sprinkle I thee! Be the ruler over kings in this world. The illustrious mother bore thee as the great universal ruler over men; the blessed mother has borne thee, &c.'

* * * * * *

"Now, he gives into his hand a goblet of spirituous liquor, under the recital of the verse Svadishthayâ Madishthayâ, &c. (9, 1, 1), *i.e.*, Purify O Soma! with thy sweetest, most exhilarating drops (the sacrificer), thou who art squeezed for Indra to be drunk by him. After having put the spirituous liquor into his hand, the priest repeats a propitiatory mantra, &c.

"He now descends (from the throne seat) facing the branch of the udambara tree."—Aitareya Brâhmana, VIII, 6 to 9.

We are then told that with this ceremony priests invested a number of kings whose names are already known to us. Tura, the son of Kavasha, thus inaugurated Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit. "Thence Janamejaya went everywhere, conquering the earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse." Parvata and Nârada thus invested Yudhamsranshti, the son of Ugrasena. Vasishtha invested Sudas, the great conqueror in the Rig Veda hymns; and Dirghatamas invested Bharata, the son of Duhshanta, with this ceremony.

We have also an excellent account of the coronation rite in the Vâjasaneyi-Sanhitâ, from which we quote a

remarkable passage in which the priest blesses the newly crowned king:—"May God who rules the world bestow on you the power to rule your subjects. May fire, worshipped by house-holders, bestow on you supremacy over the house-holders. May Soma, the lord of trees, bestow on you supremacy over forests. May Vrihaspati, the god of speech, bestow on you supremacy in speech. May Indra, the highest among gods, bestow on you the highest supremacy. May Rudra, the cherisher of animals, bestow on you supremacy over animals. May Mitra, who is truth, make you supreme in truth. May Varuna, who cherishes holy works, make you supreme in holy acts."—IX, 39.

In the address to the people which follows, the priest tells them: "This is your king, O ye such and such tribes." The Kânva text reads thus: "This is your king, O ye Kurus, O ye Panchâlas."

We will conclude this chapter with an excellent piece of advice which is given to kings further on, which modern rulers will do well to remember: "*If thou shalt be a ruler, then from this day judge the strong and the weak with equal justice, resolve on doing good incessantly to the public, and protect the country from all calamities*"—*X*, 27.

CHAPTER V.

CASTE.

As we drift down the history of Hindu civilization, we notice, along with a remarkable progress in sciences and learning and the arts of peace, an unhappy sign of social institutions being more and more crystalised into hard-and-fast rules, which gradually contracted the liberties and the free energies of the people. Four or five centuries of peaceful residence in a genial climate in the fertile basin of the Ganges and the Jumna enabled the Hindus to found civilized kingdoms, to cultivate philosophy, science and arts, and to develope their religious and social institutions; but it was under the same gentle but enervating influences that they also unconsciously surrendered all social freedom, and were gradually bound down by unhealthy priest-imposed laws and restrictions which made further progress on the part of the *people* impossible. This is the dark side of Hindu civilization. Priestly supremacy threw its coils round and round the nation from its early youth, and the *nation* never attained that political and social freedom and strength which marked the ancient nations of Europe.

But the worst results of priestly supremacy were not brought about in a day. We see the dark cloud slowly forming itself at the close of the Vedic Period. We see it increasing in strength and volume in the Epic Period. We shall see it casting a still gloomier shadow on the society of the Rationalistic Period. But it is only in the Paurânik Period which followed the Buddhist Era that it threw an utter impenetrable gloom over a gifted but ill-fated nation. In the earlier periods, so long as the nation had the life and the strength of youth, it made repeated attempts to throw off priestly supremacy and to assert its free-born rights. The Kshattriyas made an attempt to assert themselves in the very period of which we are now speaking, as we have already seen. And the Kshatriyas made a still mightier attempt later on to throw Brâhmanism overboard, and adopted the Buddhist religion all over the land. With the extinction of Buddhism such attempts seemed to end, and priestly supremacy became ten times worse than before. The energies of the nation were cramped, the natural boldness of martial races was subdued by superstitious beliefs, the feeling of potitical unity was almost annihilated, and the descendants of those who had fought the Kuru-Panchâla war, and had opposed the march of Alexander, fell before petty adventurers. The great nation was conquered by an adventurer from Ghor, who had scarcely a kingdom of his own, and whose descendants soon lost all connection

with their mother country, and ruled in India through the weakness of the Hindus. And in the five or six centuries that followed the conquest, there was not political life enough in the millions of martial men who inhabited Northern India, from the Punjab to Behar to make one serious effort to send out the handful of aliens who held them in chains. Ancient Greece fell through dissensions among her petty states; Rome fell on account of her luxury and vice; India fell on account of her superstition and consequent lifelessness.

We have seen that about the close of the Vedic Period, the priests had already formed themselves into a separate profession, and sons stepped forward to take up the duties of their fathers. When religious rites became vastly more elaborate and pompous in the Epic Period, when with the founding of new kingdoms along the fertile Doab, polished and great kings prided themselves on the performance of vast sacrifices with endless rites and observances, it is easy to understand that the priests, who alone could undertake such complicated rites, rose in the estimation of the people, until they were naturally regarded as aloof from the ordinary people, as a distinct and superior race,—as a caste. They devoted their lifetime to learn these rites, and they alone were able to perform them in all their details; and the natural inference in the popular mind was that they alone were worthy of the holy task. And when hereditary priests were thus completely separated from

the people by their fancied sanctity and real knowledge of elaborate rites, it was scarcely considered "good form" on their part to form "misalliances" with the people outside their holy rank. They might still condescend to honor particular families by choosing brides from among them, but young ladies of priestly houses must never give their hands to men outside their ranks. What is a feeling and a custom among modern nations soon became an inviolable and religious rule among a passive and custom-abiding people like the Gangetic Hindus.

The very same causes led to the rise of a royal caste. Royalty had not assumed very great dignity among the Punjab Hindus. Warlike chiefs led clans from conquests to conquests; and the greatest of them like Ṣudâs, the patron of the Vasishthas and the Visvâmitras, were looked upon more as leaders of men and protectors of clans than as mighty kings. Far different was the state of things with the Gangetic Hindus. Probably in the early days of the martial Kurus and the Panchâlas, caste distinctions had not yet been fully matured. But later in the day, the kings of the peaceful Kosalas and Videhas, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of august and learned and pompous courts, were looked upon by the humble and lowly and extremely law-abiding and loyal people as more than human. As kings became more rich and more august and more addicted to the forms which indicate

royalty, as the people became more enervated and submissive and loyal, it was scarcely possible that maidens of the royal or warlike classes should condescend to marry men from the ranks. The stigma which attaches to such misalliances all over the world gave rise to an inviolable rule in India. And when priests and warriors were thus separated by such absolute and inviolable rules from the people, the humblest girls of the former classes were debarred from marriage with the greatest and richest among the Vaisyas.*

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* We have in a previous chapter (see p. 99, *ante*) quoted the authority of Weber and Max Müller to shew that *caste* did not exist in the Vedic Age. We have much pleasure in adducing here the testimony of another eminent scholar, who with Weber and Max Müller may be said to form the Triumvirate of Vedic scholarship in Europe.

Dr. Roth maintains that in the first or Vedic Age Brâhmans were the domestic priests of the kings, and that gradually the dignity became hereditary in certain families. How these isolated priestly families were impelled by similarity of interests to form a common *caste* in the Epic Age, may be described best in Dr. Roth's own words.

"When, —— at a period more recent than the majority of the hymns of the Rig Veda, —— the Vedic people driven by some political shock advanced from their abodes in the Punjab further and further to the south, drove the aborigines into the hills and took possession of the broad tract of country lying between the Ganges, the Jumma and the Vindhya range, the time had arrived when the distribution of power, the relation of king and priest, could become transformed in the most rapid and comprehensive manner. * * This era is perhaps pourtrayed to us in the principal subject of the Mahâbhârata, the contest between the descendants of Pându and Kuru. * * It is not difficult to comprehend how in such a period of transition powerful communities should arise among the

It is difficult to find in the history of European institutions any parallel to the caste-system of India. Yet there was a time in Europe when institutions somewhat similar to the caste-system of India sprang from the same causes which operated in India, *viz.*, the feebleness and enervation of the people, and the pride and power of warriors and priests. When the Roman Empire fell to pieces, and barbarian chiefs and barons carved out among themselves the fairest portions of Europe, the mass of the people were devoid of political life and political freedom. Never in Europe was there such a wide distinction between a powerful clergy and powerful soldiery on the one hand, and a lifeless and powerless people on the other side, as in the days of feudalism in Europe. Vast monasteries arose all over Europe; great feudal towers frowned on every navigable river and every humble village; and the dwellers of villages and the humble artizans in little towns were scarcely regarded as better than slaves. The clergy, the knighthood and the people of Europe in the Middle Ages answered in some respects to the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas of India.

But the resemblance is in appearance only. The clergy of Feudal Europe did not marry, and its ranks were recruited from the ablest, the cleverest, the most learned

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domestic priests of petty kings, and their families should attain to the highest importance in every department of life, *and should grow into a caste*." Quoted in Muir's *Sanscrit Texts*, Vol. I (1872), p. 291.

among the people. The knights too were glad to welcome into their ranks doughty squires and brave warriors among the people. The people too in the darkest days of feudal oppression had more of tough life and rude vigour than the passive and submissive citizens of the Gangetic plain. The people in Europe soon formed leagues to protect their commerce, fortified their towns to meet the marauding barons, formed municipal corporations, and trained themselves to arms to defend their interests in those insecure times. Ambitious scions of baronial houses often mixed with the people, and faught their battles in the field and in the council board; and this healthy admixture, which the caste-system prevented in India, revived and strengthened the people in Europe. Feudalism and the absolute power of the clergy decayed as trade and commerce and political life rose among the people; and the danger of the people being divided into three "castes," if it ever existed in Europe, passed away once and for ever.

From what has been stated before, it will appear that the caste-system arose in India from the permanent separation of the priestly and warrior classes from the people, in an age when the people had become enervated and feeble, and those two classes usurped all power and dignity. Superficial and impulsive writers often hold the Brâhmans of India to blame for monopolizing religious knowledge and observances, and creating a

harmful and permanent disunion in the nation. The charge, however, is unphilosophical and unjust. Priestly supremacy and royal despotism are inevitable when the people become enervated and feeble, and are incapable of taking care of their conscience or their political rights. Priests and kings are no more responsible for these results than the people themselves; indeed, the former are less responsible for assuming undue authority than the latter for submitting to such authority. Such chains are received ungrudgingly by a feeble and lifeless people; when the people awake to life and vigour, the chains fall asunder.

The simple origin of the caste institution as narrated above is obscured in later Hindu literature in a cloud of strange myths and legends. But in spite of such wonderful legends, later Hindu writers never completely lost sight of the fact that caste was originally only a distinction based on professions. And this simple and natural account of the origin of caste often occur in the same Paurânik works which elsewhere delight in strange and monstrous myths about the origin of the institution. We have room only for one or two extracts.

In the Vâyu Purâna we are told that in the first or Krita Age, *there were no castes*, and that subsequently Brahmâ established divisions among men *according to their works*. "Those of them who were suited for command and prone to deeds of violence, he appointed

to be Kshatriyas, from their protecting others. Those disinterested men who attended upon them, spoke the truth and declared the Veda aright were Brahmans. Those of them who formerly were feeble, engaged in the work of husbandmen, tillers of the earth, and industrious, were Vaisyas, cultivators and providers of subsistence. Those who were cleansers and ran about on service, and had little vigour or strength, were called Sûdras." Accounts more or less similar to this occur in the other Purânas also.

The Râmâyana in its present shape is, as we have seen before, the work of later ages. In the Uttara Kânda, Chapter 74, we are told that in the Krita Age Brahmans alone practised austerities: that in the Tretâ Age, Kshatriyas were born, *and then was established the modern system of four castes.* Reduced from mythical to historical language, the above account may be read thus:—In the Vedic Age, the Hindu Aryans were a united body and practised Hindu rites. In the Epic Age, however, priests and kings separated themselves as distinct castes, and the people also formed themselves into the lower orders, the Vaisyas and Sûdras.

The Mahâbhârata also, as we have seen before, is in its present shape a work of later ages, but here also we occasionally meet with a sensible and honest attempt to account for caste. In the Sânti Parva, section 188. we are told that "red-limbed twice-born men who were fond of sensual pleasure, fiery, irascible, daring

and forgetful of their sacrificial duties, fell into the caste of Kshatriyas. Yellow twice-born men, who derived their livelihood from cows and agriculture, and did not practise religious performances, fell into the caste of Vaisyas. Black twice-born men who were unpure and addicted to violence and lying, and were covetous and subsisted by all kinds of works, fell into the caste of Sûdras. *Being thus separated by these their works, the twice-born men become of other castes.*"

The composers of these and similar passages no doubt knew of the legend of the four castes springing from four members of Brahmâ's body; but they ignored it, and treated it as an allegory which it is. They maintain that in the earliest age there were no castes, and they make a very fair and sensible conjecture that castes were developed in a later age from distinctions in work and professions. We must now however return from this degression, and examine the caste-system as it prevailed in the Epic Period.

As we have stated before, the caste system first formed itself among the peaceful citizens of the ancient Gangetic India; it never should be forgotten however that the worst results of that system did not appear, and could not appear until the Hindus had ceased to be a free nation. In the Epic Period the body of the people (except the priests and soldiers) still formed one united Vaisya caste, and had not been disunited into such miserably divided commu-

nities as in the modern day. The body of the people were still entitled to religious knowledge and learning, and to perform religious rites for themselves—just like Brâhmans and Kshatriyas. And even intermarriage between Brâhmans, Kshatriyas and Vasyas was allowed under certain restrictions. However much, therefore, we may deplore the commencement of the caste-system, we should never forget that the worst results of that system,—*the priestly monopoly of learning*, *the disunion in the body of the people*, and *the absolute social separation among castes*,—were unknown in India until the Paurânik times.

In the sixteenth chapter of the White Yajur Veda, we meet with the names of various professions which throw some light on the state of the society at the time the chapter was compiled. It is apparent, however, the list is one of different professions, not of different castes. Thus, various kinds of thieves are enumerated in Kandikâs, 20 and 21, and horsemen, charioteers and infantry are spoken of in 26. Similarly the carpenter, the chariot-maker, the potter and the blacksmith, mentioned in 27, also formed different professions and not castes. The Nishâda and others, also mentioned in the same Kandikâ, were obviously aboriginal tribes, who, then as now, formed the lowest strata of Hindu society.

The list is very much enlarged in the 30th chapter of the same work which, as we have seen before, is of a considerable later date, and indeed belongs to the *Khila*

or the supplement. But here too, we meet with many names which indicate professions only, and many others which undoubtedly refer to the aborigines; and we find no evidence that the mass of the Aryan population (leaving aside the priests and warriors) had been divided into castes. We find names of different kinds of thieves, of dancers, speakers, and frequenters in assemblies; of lewd men, and sons of unmarried women; of chariot-makers, carpenters, potters, jewellers, cultivators, arrow-makers, and bow-makers; of dwarfs and crookedly formed men, blind and deaf persons; of physicians and astronomers; of keepers of elephants, horses and cattle; of servants, cooks, gate-keepers, and wood-cutters; of painters and engravers; of washermen, dyers and barbers; of learned men and proud men; of women of various descriptions; of tanners, fishermen, and hunters and fowlers; of goldsmiths and merchants; of men with various diseases; of wig-makers and imaginative men (poets); of musicians of various kinds, and men of other descriptions. It is plain that this is not a list of castes. On the other hand, the Magadha and Sûta and Bhîmala and Mrigayu and Svanin, and Nishâda and Durmada, and others mentioned in the list are clearly aborigines, living under the shadow of the Aryan society. We have only to add that the same list, with slight modifications, is given in the Taittirîya Brâhmana.

The above lists throw some light on the state of the society and the professions which were re-

cognized in the period of which we speak; but they have nothing to do with caste. Throughout the Epic Period and throughout the Rationalistic Age which followed, the great body of the Aryan people were the undivided Vaisyas, although they followed numerous professions. Along with the Brâhmans and the Kshatriyas they formed the Aryan nation; and were entitled to all the rights and privileges, and the literary and religious heritages of the nation. The conquered aborigines, who formed the Sûdra caste, were alone debarred from the heritage of the Aryans.

This is the cardinal distinction between the ancient caste system, and the caste system of the modern age. Caste reserved some privileges for priests, and some privileges for warriors, in ancient times; but *never divided and disunited the Aryan people.* Priests and warriors and citizens, though following their hereditary professions from generation to generation, felt that they were one nation and one race, received the same religious instructions, possessed the same literature and traditions, ate and drank together, intermarried and held social communion in all respects, and were proud to call themselves the Aryan race as against the conquered aborigines. Caste in modern times has cut up the Aryan people into scores of communities, has opened the wide gulf of race distinctions among the different communities, has interdicted marriage and social communion among them,

has starved the sons of the ancient Vaisyas,—the entire body of the people,—of religious knowledge and literature, and has degraded them to the rank of Sûdras.

There are numerous passages in the Brâhmana literature which shew that the distinctions between the castes were by no means so rigid in the early times as at a later period. We learn from Aitareya Brâhmana (I, 16, and II, 17), that one who was not recognised as a Brâhman (Abrâhmanokta) could be the performing priest and bring a sacrifice. A still more remarkable passage however occurs in the same Brâhmana (VII, 29), which would seem to show that caste rules were by no means rigid, and persons born in one community might enter into another. When a Kshatriya eats at a sacrifice the portion assigned for the Brâhmans, his progeny has the characteristics of a Brâhman "ready to take gifts, thirsty after drinking soma, and hungry of eating food, and ready to roam about every where according to pleasure." And "*in the second or third generation he is then capable of entering completely the Brâhmanship.*" When he eats the share of Vaisyas his "offspring will be born with the characteristic of the Vaisyas, paying taxes to another king;" "and in the second or third degree they are capable of entering the caste of the Vaisyas." When he takes the share of the Sûdras, his progeny "will have the characteristics of the Sûdras; they are to serve another (the three higher castes), to be

expelled and beaten according to the pleasure (of their masters)." And "in the second or third degree, he is capable of entering the condition of the Sûdras."

In a previous chapter we have seen that Janaka, king of the Videhas, imparted to Yâjnavalkya learning unknown to the priest before. On this "Yâjnavalkya offered the king the choice of a boon. He replied 'let me enquire of thee whatever I desire O Yâjnavalkya! Henceforth Janaka became a Brâhman." (Satapatha Brâhmana, XI, 6, 2, 1.)

We have other evidences to show that men not born Brâhmans became Brâhmans by their reputation and their learning. In Aitareya Brâhmana (II, 19), we are told of Kavasha, the son of Ilushâ, whom the other Rishis expelled from a sacrificial session, saying, "how should the son of a slave girl, a gamester, who is no Brâhman, remain among us and become initiated?" But Kavasha knew the gods and all the gods knew him, and he was admitted as a Rishi. Similarly, in the beautiful legend of Satyakâma Jabâla in the Chhândogya Upanishad (IV, 4), is exemplified the fact that truth and learning opened out in those days a path to the highest honor and to the highest caste. The legend is so beautiful in its simplicity and its poetry, that we feel no hesitation in quoting a portion of it :—

"1. Satyakâma, the son of Jabâlâ, addressed his mother and said: 'I wish to become a Brahmachârin (religious student), mother. Of what family am I?'

"2. She said to him: 'I do not know, my child, of what family thou art. In my youth when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabâlâ by name, thou art Satyakâma, say that thou art Satyakâma Jabâla.'

"3. He going to Gautama Haridrumata, said to him: 'I wish to become a Brahmachârin with you, Sir May I come to you, Sir?'

"4. He said to him: 'O what family are you, my friend?' He replied: I do not know, Sir, of what family I am. I asked my mother, and she answered—

"In my youth when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabâlâ by name, thou art Satyakama." 'I am therefore Satyakâma Jabâla, Sir.'

"5. He said to him: 'No one but a true Brâhman would thus speak out. Go and fetch fuel, friend, I shall initiate you. You have not swerved from the truth.'"

And this truth-loving young man was initiated, and according to the custom of the times, went out to tend his teacher's cattle. In time he learnt the great truths which nature, and even the brute creation, teach those whose minds are open to instruction. Yes, he learned truths from the bull of the herd that he was tending, from the fire that he had lighted, and from a flamingo and a diverbird which flew near him, when in the evening he had penned his cows and laid wood on the evening fire, and sat behind it. The young student then

came back to his teacher, and his teacher at once said: "Friend you shine like one who knows Brahman: who then has taught you?" "Not men," was the young student's reply. And the truth which the young student had learnt (though clothed in the fanciful and somewhat grotesque style of the period) was that the four quarters, and the earth, the sky, the heaven and the ocean, and the sun, the moon, the lightning, and the fire, and the organs and mind of living beings, yea the whole universe was Brahman or God.

Such is the teaching of the Upanishads, and such are the poetical legends in which the teaching is clothed as we shall see further on. A legend like that of Satyakâma Jabâla in the Upanishads, which is full of human feeling and pathos and the highest moral lessons, cheers and refreshes the student after he has waded through pages of the dry and meaningless dogmas and rituals of the Brâhmanas. But our purpose in quoting the legend here is to show that the rules of the caste had not become yet rigid when such legends were composed. We find in the legend that the son of a servant girl, who did not know his own father, became a religious student simply through his love of truth, learnt the lessons which nature and the learned men of the time could teach him, and subsequently became classed among the wisest religious teachers of the time. Surely the caste-system of that ancient time must have been freedom itself compared to the enslaving system of later times,

when the entire nation except the priests was cruelly debarred from knowledge,—that knowledge which is the food of a nation's mind, and the life of a nation's life.

There is another legend in the same Upanishad (IV, 2), in which we find a Brâhman imparting knowledge to a Sûdra, accepting presents from him, and taking his daughter for his wife. The legend is in the usual simple language of the Upanishad, and we will therefore quote it :—

"1. Then Jânasruti Putrâyana took six hundred cows, a necklace, and a carriage with mules, went to Raikva and said—

"2. 'Raikva, here are six hundred cows, a necklace, and a carriage with mules; teach me the deity which you worship?'

"3. The other replied: 'Fie, necklace and carriage be thine O Sûdra, together with the cows.' Then Jânasruti Putrâyana took again a thousand cows, a necklace, a carriage with mules, and his own daughter and went to him.

"4. He said to him: 'Raikva, there are a thousand cows, a necklace, a carriage with mules, this wife, and this village in which thou dwellest, Sir, teach me?'

"5. He opening her mouth, said: 'You have brought these (cows and other presents), O Sûdra, but only by that mouth did you make me speak."

The Sûdra, however, though in exceptional cases admitted to knowledge, does not appear to have been ever

admitted to the sacrifice. On the other hand, the Brâhmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were all able to sacrifice (Satapatha Brâhmana, III, 1, 9), and therefore the distinctions between these castes was small, and the supremacy of the Brâhman was almost nominal yet. In one passage, indeed, we have it boldly stated that a Brâhman may be of uncertain birth, but that he only is a true Brâhman who is born of the *Brahman* of the sacrifice; wherefore *even a Râjanya or a Vaisya should be addressed as Brahman* "since who is born of the sacrifice is born of the *Brahman* and hence a Brâhmana." (Satapatha Brâhmana, III, 2, 1, 40.)

It was in the Epic Period that the sacrificial cord Yajnopavîta came to use. We are told in the Satapatha Brâhmana, II, 4, 2, that when all beings came to Prajâpati, the gods and the fathers came, wearing the sacrificial cord. And we are told in Kaushîtaki Upanishad, II, 7, that the all-conquering Kaushîtaki adores the sun when rising, having put on the sacrificial cord.

The Yajnapavîta was worn in this ancient period by Brâhmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas alike, but only at the time of performing Yajna or Vedic worship and sacrifices.

Things have changed since those ancient times. The Yajnapavîta is now habitually and ostentatiously worn at all times—by the members of one caste only—the Brâhmans, and that caste has forgotten to perform Vedic Yajna!

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE. THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

THE great distinction then between the society of the Vedic times and the society of the Epic Period is that the caste-system was unknown in the former, and had been developed in the latter. But this was not the only distinctive feature of the times. Centuries of culture and progress had their influence on society, and the cultured Hindus of the Epic Period were as widely different in their social manners from the warrior-cultivators of the Vedic Period as the Greeks of the time of Pericles were different from the Greeks of the time of Agamemnon and Ulyses.

The Hindus of the period, of which we are speaking, had attained a high degree of refinement and civilization and had developed minute rules to regulate their domestic and social duties. Royal courts were the seats of learning, and the learned and wise of all nations were invited, honored and rewarded. Justice was administered by learned officers, and laws regulated every duty of life. Towns with their strong walls and beautiful edifices multiplied among all nations, and had

their judges, their executive officers and their police. Agriculture was fostered, and the king's officers settled all disputes and looked to the collection of taxes and the comforts of cultivators.

We have said that the courts of enlightened and learned kings, like those of the Vedehas, the Kâsîs, and the Kuru-Panchâlas, were the principal seats of learning in those times. Learned priests were retained in such courts for the performance of sacrifices, and also for the purpose of the cultivation of learning; and many of the Brâhmanas and Upanishads, which have been handed down to us, were probably composed in the schools which these priests founded. On great occasions men of learning came from distant towns and villages, and discussions were held not only on ritualistic matters, but on such subjects as the human mind, the destination of the soul after death, the future world, the nature of the gods, the fathers, and the different orders of being, and lastly on the nature of that Universal Being who has manifested himself in all the works we see.

But learning was not confined to royal courts. There were Parishads or Brâhmanic settlements for the cultivation of learning, answering to the Universities of Europe; and young men went to these Parishads to acquire learning. Thus in Brihadâranyaka Upanishad VI, 2, we learn that Svetaketu went to the Parishads of the Panchâlas for his education. Max Müller in his

History of Sanscrit Literature, quotes passages which show that, according to modern writers, a Parishad ought to consist of twenty-one Brâhmans well versed in philosophy, theology, and law; but these rules, as he points out, are laid down in later law books, and do not describe the character of the Parishads of the Epic Period. Parâsara says that four, or even three able men from amongst the Brâhmans in a village, who know the Veda and keep the sacrificial fire, form a Parishad.

Besides these Parishads, individual teachers established what would he called private schools in Europe, and often collected round themselves students from various parts of the country. These students lived with their teachers, served them in a menial capacity during the time of their studentship and then, after twelve years or longer, made suitable presents and returned to their homes and their longing relatives. Learned Brâhmans who had retired to forests in their old age often collected such students round them, and much of the boldest speculations in the Epic Period has proceeded from these sylvan and retired seats of sanctity and learning. Such is the way in which learning has been cultivated and preserved during thousands of years among the Hindus, a nation who valued learning and knowledge perhaps more than any other nation in ancient or modern times. Good works and religious rites lead, according to the Hindu

creed, to happier states of life and to their due reward; but true knowledge alone leads to final union with God.

When students had thus acquired the traditional learning either in Parishads or under private teachers, they returned to their homes, married, and settled down as householders. With marriage began their duties as householders, and the first duty of a householder was to light the sacrificial fire under an auspicious constellation, to offer morning and evening libations of milk to the fire, to perform other religious and domestic rites, and above all to offer hospitality to strangers and to receive and honor guests. The essence of a Hindu's duties are inculcated in passages like the following:—

"Say what is true! Do thy duty! Do not neglect the study of the Veda! After having brought to thy teacher the proper reward, do not cut off the lives of children! Do not swerve from the truth! Do not swerve from duty! Do not neglect what is useful! Do not neglect greatness! Do not neglect the learning and teaching of the Veda!

Do not neglect the (sacrifice) works due to the gods and fathers! Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god! Let thy father be to thee like unto a god! Let thy teacher be to thee like unto a god! Whatever actions are blameless, those should be regarded, not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be observed by thee."—(Taittirîya Upanishad, I, 2.)

Pleasing pictures of a happy state of society are presented in many passages which we meet with in the literature of the period: "May the Brâhmans in our kingdom," says the priest at a horse-sacrifice, "live in piety; may our warriors be skilled in arms and mighty; may our cows yield us profuse milk, our bullocks carry their weights, and our horses be swift; may our women defend their homes, and warriors be victorious; may our youths be refined in their manners.........May Parjanya shower rain in every home and in every region; may our crops yield grains and ripen, and we attain our wishes and live in bliss."—(White Yajur Veda XXII, 22.)

The wealth of rich men consisted in gold and silver and jewels; in cars, horses, cows; mules and slaves; in houses and fertile fields, and even in elephants. (Chhândogya Upanishad, V, 13, 17, and 19; VII, 24; Satapatha Brâhmana, III, 2, 48; Taittirîya Upanishad, I, 5, 12, &c., &c.) Gold is considered a proper gift at sacrifice, the gift of silver (Rajatam Hiranyam) being strictly prohibited. The reason is sufficiently grotesque, as the reasons given in the Brâhmans generally are: When the gods claimed back the goods deposited with Agni, he wept, and the tears he shed became silver; and hence if silver is given as *dakshinâ*, there will be weeping in the house! The reason scarcely veils the cupidity of priests which was the real cause of gifts in gold.

Not only was the use of gold and silver known, but several other metals are mentioned in white Yajur Veda, XVIII, 13. The following passage from the Chhândogya Upanishad specifies some metals then in use.

"As one binds gold by means of *lavana* (borax), and silver by means of gold, and tin by means of silver, and lead by means of tin, and iron (*loha*) by means of lead, and wood by means of iron, and also by means of leather." (IV, 17, 7.)

In Aitareya Brâhmana, VIII, 22, we are told, evidently in the language of exaggeration, that the son of Atri presented ten thousand elephants and ten thousand slave girls, "well endowed with ornaments on their necks, who had been gathered from all quarters."

As in the Vedic Period, the food of the people consisted of various kinds of grain as well as the meat of animals. In the Brihadâranyaka Upanishad, VI, III, 13, ten kinds of seeds are mentioned, *viz.*, rice and barley (brîhiyavâs), sesamum and kidney beans (tilamâshâs), millet and panic seed (anupriyangavas), wheat (godhûmâs) lentils (masûrâs), pulse, (khalvâs) and vetches (khalakulâs).

In the White Yajur Veda, XVIII, 12, we have a list of these grains, beside mudga, nîvâra, and syâmâkar. Grains were ground and sprinkled with curds, honey and clarified butter, and so made into different kinds of cake. Milk and its various preparations have ever been a favorite food in India.

Animal food was in use in the Epic Period, and the cow and the bull were often laid under requisition. In Aitareya Brâhmana, I, 15, we learn that an ox or a cow which miscarries is killed when a king or an honored guest is received.

In the Brâhmana of the Black Yajur Veda, the kind and character of the cattle which should be slaughtered in minor sacrifices, for the gratification of particular divinities, are laid down in detail. Thus a dwarf one is to be sacrificed to Vishnu, a drooping horned bull to Indra, a thick-legged cow to Vâyu, a barren cow to Vishnu and Varuna, a black cow to Pûshan, a cow having two colors to Mitra and Varuna, a red cow to Indra, &c., &c. In a larger and more important ceremonial, like the Asvamedha, no less than 180 domestic animals, including horses, bulls, cows, goats, deer, &c., were sacrificed. The same Brâhmana lays down instructions for carving, and the Gopatha Brâhmana tells us who received the different portions. The priests got the tongue, the neck, the shoulder, the rump, the legs, &c., while the master of the house (wisely) appropriated to himself the sirloin, and his wife had to content herself with the pelvis! Plentiful libations of the Soma beer were allowed to wash down the meat!

In the Satapatha Brâhmana, IV, 5, we have a detailed account of the slaughter of a barren cow and its cooking. In III, 1, 2, 21 of the same Brâhmana there

is an amusing discussion as to the propriety of eating the meat of an ox or a cow. The conclusion is not very definite: "Let him (the priest) not eat the flesh of the cow and the ox." Nevertheless Yâjnavalkya said (taking apparently a very practical view of the matter), "I for one eat it, provided that it is tender!"

The practical Yâjnavalkya could scarcely however have contemplated the wonderful effects of vegetable and animal diets respectively, as laid down in the following passage from the Brihadâranyaka Upanishad (VI, 4, 17 and 18):—

"And if a man wishes that a learned daughter should be born to him, and that she should live to her full age, then after having prepared boiled rice with sesamum and butter they (the husband and wife) should both eat, being fit to have offspring.

"And if a man wishes that a learned son should be born to him, famous, a public man, a popular speaker, that he should know all the Vedas, and that he should live to his full age, then after having prepared boiled rice with meat and butter, they (the husband and wife) should both eat, being fit to have offspring. The meat should be of a young or of an old bull."

We scarcely thought that the venerable composers of the Vedic Brâhmanas ever suspected any sort of connexion between beef eating and public speaking, such as has manifested itself in later days!

And now let our readers by an effort of their im-

agination construct for themselves the social life which the Hindus of the Epic Period, which the citizens of Hastinâpura and Kâmpilya and Ayodhyâ lived three thousand years ago. The towns were surrounded by walls, beautified by edifices, and laid out in specious streets,—which would not bear comparison with the structures and roads of modern days,—but were probably the finest of their kind in ancient times. The king's palace was always the centre of the town and was frequented by boisterous barons and a rude soldiery as well as by holy saints and learned priests. The people flocked to the palace on every great occasion, loved, respected and worshipped the king, and had no higher faith than loyalty to the king. Householders and citizens had their possessions and wealth in gold, silver and jewels, in cars, horses, mules, and slaves, and in the fields surrounding the town. They kept the sacred fire in every respectable household, honored guests, lived according to the law of the land, offered sacrifices with the help of Brâhmans and honored knowledge. Every Aryan boy was sent to his school at an early age. Brâhmans and Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were educated together, learnt the same lessons and the same religion, and returned home, married and settled down as householders. Priests and soldiers were a portion of the people, intermarried with the people, and ate and drank with the people. Various classes of manufacturers supplied the various wants of a civilized society, and

followed their ancestral professions from generation to generation, but were not cut up into separate castes. Agriculturists lived with their herds and their ploughs round each town: while holy saints and men of learning sometimes lived away in forests to add day by day to that knowledge which was the most eherished heritage of the Aryans. The picture of ancient life can be indefinitely enlarged; but each reader will probably do this for himself. We will turn from this general account of ancient society to examine the position which women held in that society.

We have seen that the absolute seclusion of women was unknown in ancient India. Hindu women held an honored place from the dawn of Hindu civilisation four thousand years ago; they inherited and possessed property; they took a share in sacrifices and religious duties; they attended great assemblies on state occasions; they openly frequented public thoroughfares, according to their needs, every day of their life; they often distinguished themselves in science and the learning of their times; and they even had their legitimate influence on politics and administration. And although they have never mixed so freely in the society of men as women do in modern Europe, yet absolute seclusion and restraint are not Hindu customs; they were unknown in India till the Mahomedan times; and are to this day unknown in parts of India like the Maharashtra, where the rule of the Moslems was brief. No

ancient nation held their women in higher honor than the Hindus, but the Hindus have been misjudged and wronged by writers unacquainted with their literature, and who received their notions of the women of the East from Turkish and Arab customs.

Innumerable passages could be quoted from the Brâhmana literature, showing the high esteem in which women were held, but we will content ourselves with one or two. The first is the celebrated conversation between Yâjnavalkya and his learned wife Maitreyî on the eve of his retirement into forests :—

"1. Now when Yâjnavalkya was going to enter upon another state, he said: 'Maitreyî, verily I am going away from this my house. Forsooth let me make a settlement between thee and Kâtyâyanî.'

"2. Maitreyî said : 'My Lord if this whole earth full of wealth, belonged to me, tell me, should I be immortal by it?' 'No,' replied Yâjnavalkya; 'like the life of rich people will be thy life. But there is no hope of immortality by wealth?'

"3. And Maitreyî said: 'What should I do with that by which I do not become immortal? What my lord knoweth of immortality, tell that to me?'

"4. Yâjnavalkya replied : 'Thou who art truly dear to me, thou speakst dear words. Come, sit down, I will explain it to thee, and mark well what I say.'

And then he explained the principle which is so often and so impressively taught in the Upanishads, that the

Universal Self dwells in the husband, in the wife, in the sons, and in wealth, in the Brâhmans and Kshatriyas, and in all the worlds, in the Devas, in all living creatures, yea, in all the universe.—Brihadâranyaka Upanishad.

Our next quotation, which is also from the same Upanishad relates to a great assembly of learned men in the court of Janaka, king of the Videhas:—

"Janaka Videha sacrificed with a sacrifice at which many presents were offered to the priests of (the Asvamedha). Brâhmans of the Kurus and the Panchâlas had come thither, and Janaka wished to know which of those Brâhmans was the best read. So he enclosed a thousand cows, and ten padas (of gold) were fastened to each pair of horns.

"2. And Janaka spoke to them: 'Ye venerable Brâhmans he who among you is the wisest, let him drive away these cows.' Then those Brâhmans durst not, but Yâjnavalkya said to his pupil 'Drive them away, my dear.' He replied, 'O glory of the Sâman!' and drove them away."

On this the Brâhmans became angry, and plied the haughty priest Yâjnavalkya with questions, but Yâjnavalkya was a match for them all. Asvala the Hotri priest, Jâratkarava Ârtabhâga, Bhujyu Lâhyâyani, Ushasta Châkrâyana, Kahola Kaushîtakeya, Uddâlaka Aruni, and others plied Yâjnavalkya with questions, but Yâjnavalkya was not found wanting; the learned men, one by one, held their peace.

There was one in the great assembly—and this is a remarkable fact which throws light on the manners of the time—who was not deficient in the learning and the priestly lore of those times, because she was a lady. She rose in the open assembly, and said: "O Yâjnavalkya, as the son of a warrior from the Kâsîs or Vedehas might string his loosened bow, take two pointed foe-piercing arrows in his hand and rise to battle, I have risen to fight thee with two questions. Answer, me these questions." The questions were put and were answered, and Gârgî Vâchaknavi was silent.

Do not these passages and such passages as these indicate that women were honored in ancient India, more perhaps than among any other ancient nation in the face of the globe? Considered as the intellectual companions of their husbands, as their friend and affectionate helpers in the journey of life, as the partners of their religious duties and the source of their pure domestic bliss, Hindu wives were honored and respected in ancient times. It was not often that they attained the abstruse learning of a Maitreyî or a Gârgî; but nevertheless they were well informed in general matters and well trained in their own domestic duties. Free from all undue restraint on their movements and actions, women moved freely in the society in which they lived, frequented public festivities and sights, performed religious sacrifices, visited friends, and received visits. More than this, they had their rights to property and to inheritance which

indicate the honor and regard in which they were held. It would be scarcely fair to compare ancient customs with the institutions of modern civilization; but the historian of India, who has studied the literature of the ancient Hindus, will have no hesitation in asserting that never in the most polished days of Greece or Rome were women held in higher regard in those countries than they were in India three thousand years ago.

As we have said before, early marriage and child marriage were still unknown in the Epic Period, and we have numerous allusions to the marriage of girls at a proper age. Widow marriage was not only not prohibited, but there is distinct sanction for it; and the rites which the widow had to perform before she entered into the married state again are distinctly laid down. As caste was still a pliable institution, men belonging to one caste not unoften married widows of another, and Brâhmans married widows of other castes without any scruple. "And when a woman has had ten former husbands, not Brâhmans, if a Brâhman then marries her, it is he alone who is her husband." *Atharva Veda*, V, 17, 8.

Polygamy was allowed among the Hindus as among many other ancient nations, but was confined in India to kings and wealthy lords as a rule. Modern readers, who would judge harshly of ancient Hindu civilization from the prevalence of this custom, should remember that polygamy was nearly universal among the weal-

thy people of all nations in ancient times, and that, to take some instances, Alexander the Great and his successors Lysimachus, Selucus, Ptolemy, Demetrius, Pyrhus and others were all polygamists! Polyandry, we need hardly say, was unknown in Aryan India: "For one man has many wives, but one wife has not many husbands at the same time."—Aitareya Brâhmana, III, 23.

There is in the Satapatha Brâhmana (I, 8, 3, 6) a curious passage prohibiting marriages among blood relations to the third or fourth generation: "Hence from one and the same man spring both the enjoyer (the husband) and the one to be enjoyed (the wife)"; "for now kingsfolk live sporting and rejoicing together saying, in the fourth (or) third man (generation) we unite." The rule of prohibition became more strict in later times.

Women in India have ever been remarkable for their faithfulness and their duteous affection towards their husbands, and female unfaithfulness is comparatively rare. It would appear that Hindu priests like Roman Catholic priests found a way to discover the most hidden secrets of frail women, and the following rule reads like a rule of Roman Catholic confessional:

"Thereupon the Pratiprasthâtri returns (to the place where the sacrificer's wife is seated). When he is about to lead the wife away, he asks her? 'With whom holdest thou intercourse'? Now when a woman who belongs to

one (man) carries an intercourse with another, she undoubtedly commits (a sin) against Varuna. He therefore asks her, lest she should sacrifice with a secret pang in her mind; for when confessed, the sin becomes less, since it becomes truth: this is why he thus asks her. And whatever (connexion) she confesses not, that indeed will turn out injurious to the relatives." (Satapatha Brâhmana, II, 5, 2, 20).

CHAPTER VII.

LAW, ASTRONOMY, AND THE PROGRESS OF LEARNING.

THE punishment of criminals and a proper administration of the law are the foundations on which all civilized societies are built, and we find a warm appreciation of law in some passages in the Brâhmana literature: "Law is the kshatra (power) of the Kshatra, therefore there is nothing higher than the law. Thenceforth even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of the law as with the help of a king. Thus the law is what is called the true. And if a man declares what is true, they say he declares the law; and if he declares the law, they say he declares what is true. Thus both are the same." (Brihadâranyaka I, 4, 14.) No nobler definition of law has been discovered by all the jurists in the world.

The judicial procedure was still however crude, and as among other ancient nations, criminals were often tried by the ordeal of fire.

"They bring a man hither whom they have taken by the hand, and they say: 'He has taken something, he has committed theft.' (When he denies, they say): 'Heat the hatchet for him.' If he committed the theft, then he . . grasps the heated hatchet, he is burnt and he is

killed. But if he did not commit the theft, then he . . grasps the heated hatchet, he is not burnt, and he is delivered." (Chhândogya, VI, 16.) Murder, theft, drunkenness and adultery are generally the offences alluded to.

The first elementary knowledge of the astronomical science is discernable in the Rig Veda itself. The year was divided into twelve lunar months, and a thirteenth or intercalary month was added to adjust the lunar with the solar year (I, 25, 8.) The six seasons of the year were named Madhu, Mâdhava, Sukra, Suchi, Nabha and Nabhasya, and were connected with different gods (II, 36.) The different phases of the moon were observed and were personified as deities. Râkâ is the full moon, Sinîvâli is the last day before the new moon, and Gungu is the new moon (II, 32). The position of the moon with regard to the Nakshatras or the lunar mansions is also alluded to (VIII, 3, 20), and some of the constellations of the lunar mansions are also named in X, 85, 13; but these hymns were probably composed at the time of the compilation of the Rig Veda which falls within the Epic Period, when the lunar zodiac was finally settled.

As might be expected, there was a considerable progress made in the Epic Period. Astronomy had now come to be regarded as a distinct science, and astronomers by profession were called Nakshatra Darsa and Ganaka. (Taittirîya Brâhmana IV, 5, and White

Yajur Veda, XXX, 10, 20.) The twenty-eight lunar mansions are also enumerated singly in the Black Yajur Veda, and a second and later enumeration occurs in the Atharva Sanhitâ and in the Taittirîya Brâhmana. An interesting passage in Satapatha Brâhmana (II, 1, 2) shows how sacrificial rites were regulated by the position of the moon in reference to these lunar asterisms. It is too long to be quoted, and we will therefore give extracts :—

"1. He may set up two fires under the *Krittikâs* (the pleiades), for they, the Krittikâs, are doubtless Agni's asterism. * *

6. He may also set up his fires under (the asterism of) *Rohinî*. For under Rohinî it was that Prajâpati, when desirous of projeny set up his fires. * * 8. He may also set up his fires under (the asterism of) *Mrigasîrsha*. For Mrigasîrsha, indeed, is the head of Prajâpati. * * He may also set up his fires under the *Phalgunîs*. They, the Phalgunîs, are Indra's asterism, and even correspond to him in name ; for, indeed, Indra is also called Arjuna, this being his mystic name ; and (they Phalgunîs) are also called Arjunîs. * * 12. Let him set up his fire under the asterism *Hastâ*, whosoever should wish that (presents) should be offered him : then indeed (that will take place) forthwith ; for whatever is offered with the hand (hasta), that indeed is given to him. 13. He may also set up his fires under *Chitrâ*," &c., &c.

But not only was the setting up of the sacrificial fires regulated by the constellations, but sacrifices lasting for a year were regulated by the sun's annual course. Dr. Martin Haug, the editor and translator of the Aitareya Brâhmana has made some excellent remarks on this subject which deserve to be quoted :

"A regulation of the calendar by such (astronomical) observations was an absolute necessity for the Brâhmans ; for the proper time of commencing and ending their sacrifices, principally the so-called *Sattras* or sacrificial sessions, could not be known without an accurate knowledge of the time of the sun's northern and southern progress. The knowledge of the calendar forms such an essential part of the ritual that many important conditions of the latter cannot be carried out without the former. The sacrifices are allowed to commence only at certain lucky constellations and in certain months ; so, for instance, as a rule, no great sacrifice can commence during the sun's southern progress (*dakshinâyana*) ; for this is regarded up to the present day as an unlucky period for the Brâhmans, in which even to die is believed to be a misfortune. The great sacrifices take place generally in spring in the months *Chaitra* and *Vaisâkha* (April and May.) The *Sattras*, which lasted for a year, were, as one may learn from a careful perusal of the 4th Book of the Aitareya Brâhmana, nothing but an imitation of the sun's yearly course. They were divided into two distinct parts,

each consisting of six months of thirty days each; in the midst of both was the Vishuvan, *i.e.*, equator or central day, cutting the whole *Sattra* into two halves. The ceremonies were in both the halves exactly the same; but they were in the latter half performed in an inverted order. This represents the increase of the days in the northern and their decrease in the southern progress; for both increase and decrease take place exactly in the same proportions."—Introduction, Pp. 46 and 47.

We have said that the lunar zodiac was finally arranged in India towards the close of the Vedic Period, or the commencement of the Epic Period, say, B. C., 1400. The illustrious Colebrooke first stated his opinion that the Hindus arranged the lunar mansions from their own observations; and later researches into the intimate connection between the Vedic rites and the position of the moon with regard to the stars leave no doubt whatever as to the indigenous origin of Hindu astronomy. But nevertheless some European scholars have indulged in conjectures as to the origin of Hindu astronomy, and a controversy which may really be called a battle of books has raged in Europe and America!

The eminent French savant Biot writing in 1860 described the Chinese system of *Sieu* as an indigenous Chinese institution, and the inference was that the Hindu *Nakshatras* and Arab *Manazil* were borrowed

from the Chinese. The German scholar Lassen was led to adopt this opinion. The profound scholar Weber however took up the subject, and in two elaborate essays published in 1860 and 1861 proved that the Chinese *Sieu* as well as the Arab *Manazil* "in respect of order, number, identity of limiting stars, and inequality of distance correspond to one of the most modern phases of the Hindu *Nakshatras*, prior to which these have their own peculiar history of development." Weber thus finally disposes of the theory of the Chinese origin of the *Nakshatras*, and further proves that the Arab lunar mansions were imported by the Arabs from India. And this is exactly the conclusion to which Colebrooke had arrived as far back as 1807, when he wrote that the Hindus had an ecliptic, "seemingly their own: it was certainly borrowed by the Arabians."

Having thus finally disposed of the Chinese and Arabian theories, Professor Weber must needs start a theory of his own, which we may call the Chaldean theory! He conjectures that the Hindu system may have been derived from some foreign source, probably Babylon. This is nothing but a conjecture, a mere suspicion, for Assyrian scholars have not yet obtained any trace of a lunar zodiac among the archives of old Babylonian learning; but Professor Whitney of America supports this "suspicion" as he calls it because he thinks the Hindus "were not a people of such habits of mind" as to make observations in the heavens and

settle the lunar zodiac. The argument is so amusing that the learned professor almost withdraws it himself, stating that the argument "is not of a character to compel belief."

When scholars condescend to such wild reasoning, it is idle to pursue the controversy. We will therefore conclude this subject with a passage in which Max Müller puts forward the common sense view of the subject. "The 27 Nakshatras, or the 27 constellations which were chosen in India as a kind of lunar zodiac, were supposed to have come from Babylon. Now the Babylonian zodiac was solar, and in spite of repeated researches, no trace of a lunar zodiac has been found, where so many things have been found, in the cuneiform inscriptions. But supposing even that a lunar zodiac had been discovered in Babylon, no one acquainted with Vedic literature, and with the ancient Vedic ceremonial would easily allow himself to be persuaded that the Hindus had borrowed that simple division of the sky from the Babylonians."*

Besides fixing the lunar zodiac, the Hindus of this period observed the solstitial points to fix the dates of momentous events, and divided the year into months, naming each month after the lunar constellation at which the moon was at its full in the particular month. If we can rely on Bentley, this naming of the months

* India: What can it teach us. (1883). P. 126.

must have taken place in 1181 B. C., and 1426 B. C. is given for the formation of the lunar mansions.* A knowledge of the solar zodiac was borrowed from the Greeks, after the Christian era, as we will see in a subsequent Book.

Besides astronomy, other branches of learning were also cultivated in the Epic Period. Thus in Chhândogya Upanishad (VII, 1, 2), we find Nârada saying to Sanatkumâra, "I know the Rig Veda, sir, the Yajur Veda, the Sâma Veda, as the fourth the Atharvana, as the fifth the Itihâsa Purâna, the Veda of the Vedas (grammar); the Pitrya (rules for sacrifices for the ancestors); the Râsi (the science of numbers); the Daiva (the science of portents); the Nidhi (the science of time); the Vâkovâkya (logic); the Ekâyana (ethics); the Deva Vidyâ (etymology;) the Brahma Vidyâ (pronunciation, prosody, &c.); the Bhûta Vidyâ (the science of demons); the Kshatra Vidyâ (the science of weapons); the Nakshatra Vidyâ (astronomy); the Sarpa Devanjana Vidyâ (the science of serpents and of genii). All this I know, sir."

In Brihadâranyaka (II, 4, 10) we are told that "Rig-Veda, Yajur Veda, Sâma Veda, Atharvângirasas, Itihâsa (legends), Purâna (cosmogonies) Vidyâ (knowledge), the Upanishads, Slokas (verses), Sûtras (prose rules) Anu Vyâkhyânas (glosses), Vyâkhyânas (com-

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* Hindu Astronomy. London (1825). P. 3 and 10.

mentaries), have all been breathed forth from the Supreme Being.

Again in the eleventh book of the Satapatha Brâhmana, we have mention of the three Vedas, the Atharvângirasas, the Aunsâsanas, the Vidyâs, the Vâkovâkya, the Itihâsa Purâna, the Narasansîs and the Gâthâs.

Professor Weber is of opinion that these names do not necessarily imply distinct species of work which existed in the Epic Period, and which have been since lost to us. He points out that many of the names merely imply the different subjects which we still find existing in the Brâhmanas. It was at a later age, in the Rationalistic Period, that these different subjects which we find interwoven in the Brâhmanas and Upanishads branched out as separate subjects of study, and were taught in the separate Sûtra works and compositions which have came down to us.

There is considerable force in this supposition, but at the same time it seems very likely that on many of the subjects enumerated above, separate works existed in the Epic Period, which have been lost to us because they have been replaced by more elaborate and scien tific works of a later age on the same subjects.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACRIFICIAL RITES AND LEGENDS OF THE BRAHMANAS.

THE main feature which distinguishes the religion of the Epic Period from that of the preceding age is the great importance which came to be attached to *sacrifice*. In the earlier portion of the Vedic Period, men composed hymns in praise of the most imposing manifestations of nature; they deified these various natural phenomena, and they worshipped these deities under the name of Indra or Varuna of Agni or the Maruts. The worship took the shape of sacrifice, *i. e.*, the offering of milk or grain food, of animals or libations of the soma juice to the gods. Such offerings were but an accompaniment to the worship of the gods which proceeded from pious hearts and pious lips.

A gradual change, however, is perceptible towards the close of the Rig Veda, and in the period of the Brâhmanas sacrifice as such, the mere forms and ceremonials and offerings, had acquired such an abnormal importance, that everything else was lost in it. The priests appear to have believed that the ancient hymns had been composed simply and solely for the purpose

of being uttered at sacrifices, and were only a means to the great end. They entirely forgot that the hymns were themselves the earliest expression of those feelings of gratitude and fervency in the human heart which found a later and a less pure form of expression in elaborate sacrifices.

It would be entirely foreign to our purpose to describe the various kinds of sacrifices of which we find accounts in the Brâhmanas, from the simple morning or evening sacrifice (Agnihotra), and the new and full moon sacrifices (Darsa Pûrnamâsa Ishti), to the *sattras* or sacrificial sessions, which lasted for a whole year or even ten or twelve years!

Sacrifices were generally accompanied by gifts of cattle, gold, garments and food, and by the offering of animals as victims. There is a curious passage in Satapatha Brâhmana, 1, 2, 3, 7 & 8, about animal sacrifice which deserves to be quoted:

"At first, namely, the gods offered up a man as a victim. When he was offered up, the sacrificial essence went out of him. It entered into the horse. They offered up the horse. When it was offered, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into the ox, when it was offered up, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into the sheep. They offered up the sheep. When it was offered up, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into the goat. They offered up the goat. When it was offered up, the sacrificial

essence went out of it. It entered into this earth. They searched for it by digging. They found it in the shape of those two substances, the rice and barley: therefore even now they obtain those two by digging; and as much efficacy as all those sacrificed animal victims would have for him, so much efficacy has this oblation (of rice, &c.), for him who knows this."

Professor Max Müller infers from this passage that human sacrifices prevailed among the ancient Hindus, not in the Brâhmana Period, not even in the Vedic Period, but at a still remoter age. Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, we regret to observe, follows the lead of Professor Max Müller, and infers from certain other passages which he quotes from the literature of this period, that the inhuman custom prevailed in the remote past. We demur to the conclusions of these two eminent scholars.

If human sacrifice had prevailed in India before the Rig Veda hymns which are now extant were composed, we should certainly have found allusions to it in the hymns themselves—allusions far more frequent than we find in the later Brâhmana Literature. We find no such allusions. The story of Sunahsepha, as told in the Rig Veda, is no evidence of human sacrifice. And there is absolutely nothing else in the Rig Veda which can be construed as evidence of this fact. It is impossible to suppose that such a striking and fearful custom should have existed and gradually fallen into disuse without

leaving the slightest trace in the Vedic hymns, some of which have come down from a very ancient date.

And where do we find allusions to this custom in the literature of the Epic Period? The Sâma Veda is compiled from the Vedic hymns, and of course there is no mention of human sacrifice in this Veda. There is no mention of the horrible custom in the Black Yajur Veda, and there is no mention of it in the White Yajur Veda, properly so called. It is in the very latest compositions of the Epic Period,—in the *khila* or supplementary portion of the White Yajur Veda, in the Brâhmana of the Black Yajur Veda, in the Aitareya Brâhmana of the Rig Veda, and the last but one book of the Satapatha Brâhmana that we have accounts of human sacrifice. Is it possible to postulate the existence of a horrible custom in India in the remote past of which we find no mention in the Rig Veda, in the Sâma Veda, in the Black or White Yajur Veda, but the memory of which suddenly revived after a thousand years in the supplements and Brâhmanas of the Vedas? Or is it not far more natural to suppose that all the allusions to human sacrifice in the later compositions of the Epic Period are the speculations of priests, just as there are speculations about the sacrifice of the Supreme Being himself? If the priests needed any suggestion, the customs of the Non-Aryan tribes with whom they became familiar in the Epic Period would yield that suggestion.

But though human sacrifices never prevailed among the Aryans in India, animal sacrifices no doubt prevailed in ancient times, but gradually fell into disuse after the Epic Period. It was the growing repugnance to the killing of animals which was one of the causes which led to the rise of Buddhism in the Rationalistic Period, and that faith was essentially a religion of humanity and protection to all living beings.

The different varieties of sacrifices certainly exceed 1,000, but Gautama classifies them as seven kinds of Pâka-sacrifice, seven kinds of Havih-sacrifice and seven kinds of Soma-sacrifice.

The Havih-sacrifices are :—

(1) Agnyâdheya (Setting up the sacred fire).
(2) Agnihotra (Daily oblation).
(3) Darsapûrnamâsa (Full and new moon sacrifice).
(4) Âgrayana (Harvest sacrifice).
(5) Châturmâsya (Four monthly sacrifice).
(6) Nirûdhapasubandha (Animal sacrifice).
(7) Sautrâmanî (An expiation for over-indulgence in Soma).

The Soma-sacrifices are :—

(1) Agnishtoma.
(2) Atyagnishtoma.
(3) Ukthya.
(4) Shodasin.
(5) Vâjapeya.

} Different types or norms of ceremonials.

(6) Atirâtra. { Differnt types or norms of
(7) Aptoryâma. { ceremonials.

The 7 Pâka sacrifices will be enumerated in the next Book.

An account of these 21 sacrifices would be beyond the scope of the present work. The first of the above rites however, the setting up of the fire, had a most important bearing on the life of the ancient Hindus, and an account of it will illustrate sacrificial rites generally.

Asvapti, as has been observed before, boasted that in his kingdom there was no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no ignorant person, no adulterer or adulteress, and "no man without an altar in his house." In those days, to keep the sacred fire in the altar was a duty incumbent on every householder, and the breach of this rule was regarded as positive impiety and irreligiousness. The student who had returned home from his teacher or his Parishad married in due time, and then set up the sacrificial fires. This was generally done on the first day of the waxing moon, but sometimes also at full moon, probably to enable the newly married couple to enter on the sacred duties as early as possible. The performance of the Agni-âdhâna, or the establishment of the sacred fires, generally required two days. The sacrificer chose his four priests, the Brahman, the Hotri, the Adhvaryu, and the Agnîdhra, and erected two sheds or fire-houses, for the Gârhapatya and the Âhavanîya fires, respectively. A circle was marked for the Gârhapatya

fire, and a square for the Âhavanîya fire, and if a southern or Dakshinâgni was required, a semi-circular area was marked south of the space between the other two.

The Adhvaryu then procured a temporary fire, either producing it by friction, or obtaining it from certain specified sources in the village, and after the usual fivefold lustration of the Gârhapatya fire-place, he laid down the fire thereon. Towards sunset the sacrificer invoked the gods and manes. He and his wife then entered the Gârhapatya house, and the Adhvaryu handed him two pieces of wood, the *arani* for the production of the Âhavanîya fire on the next morning, and the sacrificer and his wife laid them on their laps, and propitiatory ceremonies were performed. The sacrificer and his wife remained awake the whole night and kept up the fire. In the morning the Adhvaryu extinguished the fire, or if there was to be a Dakshinâgni, he kept it till that fire was made up. Such in brief is the ceremony of the Agni-âdhâna, or the setting up of sacrificial fires, which formed an important duty in the life of every Hindu householder in ancient days, when the gods were worshipped by each man in his fire-place, and temples and idols were unknown.

We will now briefly allude to some other ancient customs. The illustrious German scholar Dr. Roth first pointed out in 1854, from a passage in the Rig Veda, (X, 18, 11) that in ancient ages burial was practised by

the Hindus. This custom was followed by the burning of the dead and the burial of the ashes. That this latter custom was also in vogue in the Rig Veda Period appears from other passages, such as X, 15, 14, and X, 16, 1. In the Epic Period, of which we are now speaking, the custom of burying had ceased altogether, and the dead were burnt, and the ashes were buried. We find an account of this in the 35th chapter of the White Yajur Veda. The bones of the deceased were collected in a vessel and buried in the ground near a stream, and a mound was raised as high as the knee and covered with grass. The relatives then bathed and changed their clothes and left the funeral ground. The same ceremony is more fully described in the Âranyaka of the Black Yajur Veda. It is scarcely necessary to add that the custom which now prevails among the Hindus is simple cremation, without the burial of the ashes. This recent custom began, according to Dr. Rajendra Lala shortly after the commencement of the Christian era.

The interesting ceremony of the gift of cakes to the departed ancestor is described in the second chapter of the White Yajur Veda. The cakes are offered to the Fire and to Soma, and the Fathers are invoked to receive their shares. Then follows an address to the Fathers with reference to the six seasons of the year. The worshipper then looks at his wife and says: "Fathers! you have made us domestic men—we have brought these gifts to you according to our power." Then offering a

thread or wool or hair, he says: "Fathers! this is your apparel, wear it." Then the wife eats a cake with a desire to have children and says: "Fathers! let a male be born in me in this season. Do you protect the son in this womb from all sickness." Departed spirits, according to the Hindu religion, receive offerings from their living descendants, and get none when the family is extinct. Hence the extreme fear of Hindus to die without male issue, and the birth of a son is a part of the religion.

Turning now to legends we note with interest how simple metaphors and similes in the Rig Veda take shape as legends in the Brâhmanas, and then expand into gorgeous myths of the Purânas.

We have seen that in Vedic hymns, Soma is said to be obtained from the sky, and brought down by a falcon. The falcon in the Brâhmana is the Gâyatrî Metre which flew up to the sky for Soma. But when Gâyatrî was carrying Soma the Gandharvas stole it. As the Gandharvas are fond of women, Vâk or speech went in the shape of a woman without clothes to delude the Gandharvas. The Gandharvas were deluded, and recited the Vedas to her; but the gods sang to her and amused her, and so she turned to the gods; "wherefore even to this day women are given to vain things, * * and hence it is, to him who dances and sings that they most readily take a fancy!" (Sat. Br. III 2, 4, 6.) Thus both Soma and Vâk came to the gods.

A most remarkable legend is told of Manu, who in the Vedic hymns is alluded to as the ancient progenitor of man, who introduced cultivation and worship by fire. The legend in the Satapatha Brâhmana (I, 8, 1), is not unlike the account of the Deluge in the Old Testament. As Manu was washing his hands a fish came unto him and said: "Rear me, I will save thee." Manu reared it, and in time it told him "in such and such a year that flood will come. Thou shalt then attend to me (*i. e.* to my advice) by preparing a ship." The flood came, and Manu entered into the ship which he had built in time, and the fish swam up to him and carried the ship beyond the northern mountain. The ship was fastened to a tree there, and as the flood subsided, Manu gradually descended. "The flood then swept away all these creatures, and Manu alone remain here."

We have elsewhere quoted a celebrated Vedic hymn in which the poet, with fervent piety, enquires, "To which god shall we give our offering." It is difficult to misunderstand the import of this simple and sublime hymn; but "the authors of the Brâhmanas had so completely broken with the past that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymn and the yearning of the poets after the unknown god, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god Ka or Who."*

* Max Müller, *Ancient Sanscrit Literature.* *P.* 433.

There is a beautiful Vedic simile in which the Sun, pursuing the Dawn, is compared to a lover pursuing a maiden. Who could have imagined that this simile would give rise to the legend which is found in the Brâhmanas (Satapatha I, 7, 4; Aitereya III, 33, &c.); that Prajâpati, the supreme god, felt a passion for his daughter, and this was the origin of creation! This legend in the Brâhmanas further developed itself in the Purânas, where Brahmâ is represented as amorous of his daughter. The whole of these monstrous legends arose from a simple metaphor in the Rig Veda about the Sun following the Dawn. That such is the origin of the Paurânik fables was known to Hindu thinkers and commentators, as will appear from the following well-known argument of Kumârila, the great opponent of Buddhism, and the predecessor of Sankarâchârya.

"It is fabled that Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, did violence to his daughter. But what does it mean? Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, is a name of the sun; and he is called so because he protects all creatures. His daughter Ushas is the dawn. And when it is said that he was in love with her, this only means that at sunrise the sun runs after the dawn, the dawn being at the same time called the daughter of the sun because she rises when he approaches. In the same manner it is said that Indra was the seducer of Ahalyâ. This does not imply that the god Indra committed such a crime; but Indra means the sun, and Ahalyâ the

night; and as the night is seduced and ruined by the sun of the morning, therefore is Indra called the paramour of Ahalyâ."

There is a myth in the Taittirîya Brâhmana (I, 1, 3, 5) that nothing was seen in the beginning except water, and a lotus leaf standing out of it. Prajâpati dived in the shape of a boar and brought up some earth and spread it out and fastened it down by pebbles. This was the earth.

A similar story is told in the Satapatha Brâhmana (II, 1, 1, 8), that the gods and Asuras both sprung from Prajâpati, and the earth trembled like a lotus leaf when the gods and Asuras contended for mastery. We know that in the Rig Veda, the word Asura is an adjective which means strong or powerful, and is invariably applied to gods except in the very last hymns of the last Mandala. In the Brâhmanas the word changed its meaning altogether, and was applied to the enemies of the gods about whom many new legends were invented.

The story of Prajâpati conceiving a passion for his daughter and this being the origin of creation has already been alluded to before. Another account is given in the Satapatha Brâhmana (II, 5, 1): "Verily in the beginning Prajâpati alone existed here." He created living beings and birds and reptiles and snakes, but they all passed away for want of food. He then made the breasts in the forepart of their body (*i. e.*, of the mammals) teem with milk, and so the living creatures survived.

While thus legends and speculations were springing up in the Epic Period, religion and religious faith was still the same as in the Vedic Period. The gods of the Rig Veda were still worshipped, and the hymns of the Rik, Sâman or Yajus were still uttered as texts. Only the veneration with which the gods were looked up to in the Vedic Period was merged now in the veneration for the sacrificial ceremonies. And superstition had increased vastly since the Vedic Period. Every sacrifice, every act, every movement has been laid down and described in the Brâhmanas, and no departure is allowed. Superstitious reasons are alleged for every act enjoined on the worshipper, and penances ordained for all kinds of mishaps. There are penances, for instance, if the cow sits down when being milked, or if she cries, or moves and spills the milk, or if the milk is spoilt, or the spoon is broken, or if the Agnihotri sheds tears, or if his wife or cow gives birth to twins! (Aitareya Brâhmana, V and VII.) Such are the inevitable results when priests are made the custodians of the conscience of a nation!

New gods however were slowly finding a place in the Hindu pantheon—names which have acquired importance in later times. We have already seen that Arjuna was another name of Indra, even in the Satapatha Brâhmana. In Chapter XVI of the White Yajur Veda, we find Rudra already assuming his more modern Paurânik names, and assuming a more distinct individuality. In

the Rig Veda, as we have already seen, Rudra is the father of the storms, he is the thunder. In the White Yajur Veda he is also described as the thunder-cloud, but is specially represented as a fearful god, and often the god of thieves and criminals, and altogether a destructive power. He is called Girisha (because clouds rest on mountains); he is called *Tâmra* or *Aruna* or *Babhru* (from the colour of the clouds); he is named Nîla-kantha or blue-necked (also from the same reason); Kapardin or the long-haired; Pasupati or the nourisher of animals; Sankara or the benefactor; Siva or the beneficent; and Ṛudra or the terrible. Thus in the Epic Period we find Rudra in a transition stage, and we already see the origin of some of the Paurânik legends about Siva. But nowhere in the Brâhmana literature do we find those legends fully developed, or Rudra represented as the Paurânik Siva, the consort of Durgâ or Kâlî. In the Kaushîtaki Brâhmana, we find great importance attached in one passage to Isâna or Mahâdeva. In Satapatha Brâhmana we find the following remarkable passage :—"This is thy share, O Rudra! Graciously accept it together with thy sister Ambikâ!" (II, 6, 2, 9.) And in a celebrated passage in the Mundaka Upanishad (which, it must be remembered, is an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda), we find Kâlî, Karâlî, Manojavâ, Sulohitâ, Sudhûmarvarnâ Sphulinginî, and Bisvarupî as the names of the seven tongues of fire. In Satapatha Brâhmana (II, 4, 4, 6), we are told of a

sacrifice being performed by Daksha Pârvati ; and in the Kena Upanished we find mention of a female called Umâ Haimavatî, who appeared before Indra and explained to Indra the nature of Brahman. These are a few specimens of the scattered materials in the Brâhmana literature, out of which the gorgeous Paurânik legend of Siva and his consort was reared.

In the Aitareya Brâhmana (VI, 15), and in Satapatha Brâhmana (I, 2, 5), we are told the story of the gods obtaining from the Asuras the part of the world which Vishnu could stride over or cover, and thus they managed to get the whole world. It is in the last book of the Satapatha Brâhmana (XIV, 1, 1), that Vishnu obtains a sort of supremacy among gods, and his head is then struck off by Indra. Krishna, the son of Devakî, is not yet a deity ; he is a pupil of Ghora Angirasa in the Chhândogya Upanishad (III, 17, 6.)

While in these scattered allusions we detect materials for the construction of the gorgeous Paurânik mythology of a later day, we also find in the Epic Period traces of that scepticism in Brâhmanical rites and creed which broke out also at a later day in the Buddhist revolution. The Tândya Brâhmana of the Sâma Veda contains the Vrâtya—stomas by which the Vrâtyas or *Aryans not living according to the Brâhmanical system* could get admission into that community. Some of them are thus described :—" They drive in open chariots of war, carry bows and lances, wear turbans, robes bordered

with red and having fluttering ends, shoes and sheep skins folded double; their leaders are distinguished by brown robes and silver neck ornaments; they pursue neither agriculture nor commerce; their laws are in a state of confusion; they speak the same language as those who have received Brâhmanical consecration, but nevertheless call what is easily spoken hard to pronounce." Is it possible that this description refers to some hordes,—probably Turanians,—who pressed into Behar through the Himalayas, and gradually adopted Hindu language and civilization? For the rest, a Vrâtya was not yet looked upon with contempt, and the Supreme Being is addressed in Prasna Upanishad as a Vrâtya.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATIONS OF THE UPANISHADS.

IT is a relief to pass on from the rituals and ceremonies of the Brâhmanas to the healthier and more vigorous speculations of the Upanishads. The Upanishads were generally composed about the close of the Epic Period, leaving out of course the later Upanishads which come down even to the Paurânik Period. Some impatience appears to have been felt with the elaborate and unmeaning rites, the dogmatic but childish explanations, and the mystic but grotesque reasoning which fill the voluminous Brâhmanas; and thinking men must have asked themselves if this was all that religion could teach. Earnest men, while still conforming to the rites laid down in the Brâhmanas, began to speculate on the destination of the human soul and on the nature of the Supreme Being. Learned Kshatriyas, who became disgusted with the pretensions of really ignorant priests, must have given a start to these healthier speculations, or at least carried them on with vigour and success, until Brâhmans who were wise in their own esteem, felt their inferi-

ority and came to them to learn something of the wisdom of the new school. And although there is much in the speculations of the new school which, after the lapse of nearly three thousand years, appears to us to be grotesque or fanciful, still it is impossible not to be struck with the vigour, the earnestness, and the originality which characterise the Upanishads.

The idea of a Supreme Being, a Universal Spirit, an all-pervading Breath or Soul is the keystone of the philosophy and thought of the Upanishads. This idea is somewhat different from Monotheism as it has been generally understood in later days. For monotheism generally recognises a God and Creator as distinct from the created beings; but the monotheism of the Upanishads, which has been the monotheism of the Hindu religion ever since, recognises God as the Universal Being;—all things else have emanated from him, are a part of him and will mingle in him, and have no separate existence. This is the lesson which Satyakâma Jabâla learnt from Nature, and this is the lesson which Yâjnavalkya imparted to his beloved and esteemed wife Maitreyî. This too is the great idea which is taught in the Upanishads in a hundred similes and stories and beautiful legends, which impart to the Upanishads their unique value in the literature of the world.

"All this is Brahman (the Universal Spirit). Let

a man meditate on that visible world as beginning, ending, and breathing in the Brahman. * *

"The Intelligent, whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (omnipresent and invisible), from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised.

"He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.

"He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised, he—my self within the heart—is that Brahman. When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain him." *Chhândogya III*, 14.

Svetaketu, as we have seen before, stayed with his teacher from his twelfth year to his twenty-fourth, and then returned home, "having then studied all the Vedas, conceited, considering himself well read, and stern." But he had yet things to learn which were not ordinarily taught in the schools of the age, and his father Uddâlaka Âruneya taught him the true nature of the Universal Spirit in beautiful similes:

"As the bees, my son, make honey by collecting the juices of distant trees, and reduce the juice into one form.

"And as these juices have no discrimination, so that they might say, I am the juice of this tree or that, in the same manner, my son, all these creatures, when they have become merged in the True, know not that they are merged in the True. * *

"These rivers, my son, run, the eastern (like the Ganges), towards the east, the western (like the Indus) towards the west. They go from sea to sea (*i. e.*, the clouds lift up the water from the sea to the sky and send it back as rain to the sea). They become indeed sea. And as those rivers, when they are in the sea, do not know, I am this or that river." * *

"'Place this salt in water and then wait on me in the morning.'

"The son did as he was commanded. The father said to him: 'Bring me the salt which you placed in the water last night.' The son having looked for it found it not, for, of course, it was melted.

"The father said: 'Taste it from the surface of the water. How is it?' The son replied: 'It is salt.' 'Taste it from the middle. How is it?' The son replied. 'It is salt.' 'Taste it from the bottom. How is it?' The son replied: 'It is salt.' The father said: 'Throw it away and then wait on me.' * *

"Then the father said, in this body, forsooth, you

do not perceive the True, my son; but there indeed it is."—*Chhândogya VI.*

"At whose wish does the mind, sent forth, proceed on its errand," asks the pupil. "At whose command does the first breath go forth? At whose wish do we utter this speech? What god directs the eye or the ear?"

The teacher replies: "It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the breath of the breath, and the eye of the eye. * *

"That which is not expressed by speech, and by which speech is expressed. * * That which does not think by mind, and by which mind is thought. * * That which does not see by the eye, and by which one sees. * * That which does not hear by the ear, and by which the ear is heard. * * That which does not breathe by breath, and by which breath is drawn,—that alone know as Brahman,—*not that which people here adore.*"—*Kena Upanishad I.*

The italics are, of course, ours. But who does not see in the above passage an effort of the human mind to shake itself from the trammels of meaningless ceremonials which priests taught and the "people here" practised, to soar into a higher region of thought and to comprehend the incomprehensible,—the breath of the breath and the soul of the soul? Who is not struck by this manly and fervent effort made by the Hindu nation, three thousand years ago, to

know the unknown Maker, to comprehend the incomprehensible God?

And the joy of him who has comprehended, however feebly, the incomprehensible God, has been well described:

"He who beholds all beings in the Self, and Self in all beings, he never turns away from it.

"When to a man who understands, the Self has become all things, what sorrow, what trouble can there be to him who once beheld that unity.

"He, the Self, encircled all, bright, incorporeal, scatheless, without muscles, pure, untouched by evil, a seer, wise, omnipresent, self-existent, he disposed all things rightly for eternal years."—*Isa Upanishad.*

In the Brihadâranyaka Upanishad we are told that all gods are the mainfestation of Self or Purusha, "for he is all gods." (I, 4, 6). And likewise that he exists in all men, in the Brâhman, the Kshatriya, Vaisya and the Sûdra.—(I, 4, 15.)

The idea of Monoism was carried to its farthest limits in the Upanishads, Dualism was never recognised. In the Sânkhya philosophy, which sprung up at a subsequent period, Nature is independent of Purusha; in the Upanishads it is not. The idea of one Universal Being was carried to its extreme limit. Everything else is a mainfestation of this Being.

Our extracts on this subject have been somewhat lengthy, but the reader will not regret it. For the idea

of one Universal Being is the very keystone of the Hindu religion, and it is necessary to examine how this idea was first developed in India in the Upanishads. We will now pass on to other matters, which have also affected and shaped the Hindu religion of subsequent ages.

The creation of the world was still a mystery to those early thinkers, and the attempts to solve it were necessarily fanciful, and sometimes grotesque. A few passages should be quoted.

"In the beginning this was non-existent. It became existent as it grew. It turned into an egg. The egg lay for the time of a year. The egg broke open. The two halves were one of silver the other of gold.

"The silver one became this earth, the golden one the sky, the thick membrane (of the white) the mountains, the thin membrane (of the yolk) the mist with the clouds, the small veins the rivers, the fluid the sea.

"And what was born from it was Âditya, the Sun. When he was born shouts of hurrah arose and all beings arose and all things which they desired.' *Chhândogya III*, 19.

A different account is given in VI, 2, of the same Upanishad where we are told that—"In the beginning there was that only, which is,—One only without a second." And that sent forth fire, and fire sent forth water, and water sent forth the earth.

The Aitareya Âranyaka describes how Prâna the breath and his companions created the world, and then discusses the question of the material cause out of which the world was created. As in the Rig Veda (X, 129), and as in the Jewish account of creation, water is said to be the first material cause.

"Was it water really? Was it water? Yes, all this was water indeed. The water was the root; the world was the shoot. He (the person) is the father, they (earth, fire, &c.), are the sons." Mahidâsa Aitareya knew this.—(II, 1, 8, 1.)

Another speculation is started in the same Upanishad:—

"Verily in the beginning all this was Self,—one only. There was nothing else blinking whatsoever." And that Self sent forth the water (above the heaven), the lights which are the sky, the mortal which is the earth, and the waters under the erath. He then formed the Purusha. Fire was produced from this Purusha's speech, air from his nose, the sun from his eyes, the different quarters from his ear, shrubs and trees from the hairs of his skin, the moon from his mind, &c. The deities (fire, &c.), then asked for a place of rest and food. A cow was led to them, and then a horse, and then a man, and they were satisfied with the man. Then *Mûrti*, Matter, was produced from water, and thus food was produced.

A story is told in the Brihadâranyaka that in the

beginning there was Self alone, and he made himself into two parts, male and female, and the pair took different shapes successively, and men, cows, horses, asses, goats, sheep and all other creatures were born.

Such were the futile attempts made in India, in ancient ages, to solve the great mystery of creation, which it has not been given to man, either in the ancient or in modern times, to solve. One great generalisation was conceived by the early philosophers of India,—they discovered a harmony or unity in the creation and the universe, and that unity was variously styled by them Brahman or Âtman, Purusha or Prâna.

Similar guesses were made, imperfect and often fanciful, but nevertheless in a fervent spirit of piety, as to the destination of the soul after death. The central idea is that which has been adopted as the cardinal principle of the Hindu religion, that good acts lead to their rewards in future existences, but it is true knowledge only which leads to union with the Universal Spirit. "As here on earth, whatever has been acquired by exertion, perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired for the next world by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth. Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds."—*Chhândogya VIII*, 1, 6.

The doctrine of transmigration of souls of which we have found no trace in the Rig Veda, is fully developed

in the Upanishads. Chitra Gângâyani, the Kshatriya king, explained to Uddâlaka Aruni and his son Svetaketu, of whom we have had repeated mention before, and who came to the Kshatriya for instruction, that departed spirits go to the moon, and the moon sends them back to be born again. "And according to his deeds and according to his knowledge he is born again here as a worm, or as an insect, or as a fish, or as a bird, or as a lion, or as a boar, or as a serpent, or as a tiger, or as a man, or as something else in different places." An account then follows of the passage of the dead to the world of Agni, to the world of Vâyu, to the world of Varuna, to the world of Prajâpati, and to the world of Brahman. "In that world there is the lake Âra, the mountains called Yeshtiha, the river Vijarâ (age less), the tree Ilya, the city Sâlajya, the palace Aparâjita (unconquerable), the door-keepers Indra and Prajâpati, the hall of Brahman called Vibhu, the throne Vichakshanâ (perception), the couch Amitaujas (endless splendour), and the beloved Mânasî (mind), and her image Châkshushî (eye), who, as if taking flowers, are weaving the worlds." And there he meets Brahman.—*Kaushîtaki I.*

The above passage is a remarkable instance of the process by which simple metaphors and similes of poets lent themselves into the formation of those gorgeous legends of which the later Purânas are full. We cannot fail to see that the passage simply describes how

the soul passes into Brahman, and the throne of perception and the couch of splendour and the beloved mind are simple metaphors. In the Purâṅas the metaphors have been crystalized into legends, and can no longer be distinguished as metaphors.

A somewhat similar doctrine of transmigration is also taught by the Kshatriya king, Pravâhana Jaibali to the same Svetaketu, son of Uddalaka Aruni. The passage of the soul through various stages to the moon is described :

"Having dwelt there, till their (good) works are consumed, they return again the way as they came, finally in the form of rain.

"Then he is born as rice and corn, herbs and trees, sesamum and beans. From thence the escape is beset with difficulties. For whoever the persons may be that eat the food, and beget offspring, he thenceforth becomes like unto them. Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a Brâhman or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog or a hog or a Chandâla."—*Chhândogya V*, 10.

The doctrine of transmigration of souls is again fully and beautifully explained in the Brihadâranyaka (IV, 4), and we will make an extract from that Upanishad :

"As a caterpillar, after having reached the end of a

blade of grass, and after having made another approach to another blade, draws itself together towards it, thus does the Self, after having thrown off this body, and dispelled all ignorance, and after making another approach to another body, draw itself together towards it.

"And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold, turns it into another newer and more beautiful shape, so does the Self, after having thrown off this body, and dispelled all ignorance, make unto himself another newer and more beautiful shape, whether it be like the Fathers, or like the Gandharvas, or like the Devas, or like Prajâpati, or like Brahman, or like other beings. * *

"So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire; who, not desiring, free from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere; being Brahman, he goes to Brahman. * *

"And as the slough of a snake lies on an anthill, dead and cast away, thus lies the body; but that disembodied immortal spirit is Brahman only, is only light."

Beautiful, indeed, are the passages which describe the final emancipation of the soul and its union with Brahman. A little further on, after the passage quoted above, occurs the following passage; and the reader will see that the Buddhist idea of Nirvâna arose out of the Hindu idea of union with Brahman:

"He, therefore, that knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, and collected, sees

self in Self, sees all in Self. Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. Evil does not burn him, he burns all evil. Free from evil, free from spots, free from doubt, he becomes a true Brâhman ;—enters the Brahma world."

Still finer is the hymn of triumph with which the soul comes to Brahman :

"I come to the hall of Prajâpati, to the house : I am glorious among Brâhmans, glorious among princes, glorious among men. I am glorious among the glorious."—*Chhândogya VIII*, 14, 1.

This beatitude, this union with Brahman or Self, was what Death taught Nachiketas in that beautiful idyll of an Upanishad called Katha. We will close the present chapter with an extract from that beautiful creation of fancy and of piety. We should remind our readers, however, that Katha is very likely an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, and apparently belongs to a later age than the other Upanishads from which we have quoted before.

Nachiketas was given by his father unto Death and entered the abode of Yama Vaivasvata, and asked him for three boons, the last of which was this :

"There is that doubt, when a man is dead ;—some saying, he is ; others, he is not. This I should like to know taught by thee, this is the third of my boons."

But Death was unwilling to reveal his secrets, and told Nachiketas to ask for other boons.

"Choose sons and grandsons who shall live a hundred years, herds of cattle, elephants, gold, horses. Choose the wide abode of the earth, and live thyself as many harvests as thou desirest.

"If you can think of any boon equal to that, choose wealth and long life. Be king, Nachiketas, on the whole earth. I make thee the enjoyer of all desires.

"Whatever desires are difficult to attain among mortals, ask for them, any thing to thy wish;—these fair maidens with their chariots and musical instruments,—such are indeed not to be obtained by men; be waited on by them whom I give thee, but do not ask me about dying."

Nachiketas said: "These things last till to-morrow, O Death, for they wear out this vigour of all the senses. Even the whole of life is short. Keep thou thy horses, keep dance and song for thyself."

Pressed by the pious enquirer, Death at last revealed the great secret, which is the principle of all the Upanishads and the principle of the Hindu religion:

"The wise who, by means of meditation on his Self, recognizes the Ancient, who is difficult to be seen, who has entered into the dark, who is hidden in the cave, who dwells in the abyss, as God,—he indeed leaves joy and sorrow far behind.

"A mortal who has heard this and embraced it, who has separated from it all qualities, and has thus reached the subtle Being, rejoices because he has obtained what

is a cause for rejoicing. The house of Brahman is open, I believe, O Nachiketas!"

Who can, even in the present day, peruse these pious enquiries and fervent thoughts of a long buried past, without feeling a new emotion in his heart, without seeing a new light before his eyes! The mysteries of creation and of the unknown future will never be solved by human intellect or by human science; but the first recorded attempts to solve them in a pious, fervent, philosophical spirit will ever have an abiding interest for every patriotic Hindu and for every thoughtful man.

In the words of the eminent German writer and philosopher Schopenhauer: "From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. Indian air surrounds us, and original thoughts of kindred spirits. * * In the whole world there is no study except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupnekhat. (Latin translation of the Upanishads.) It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."

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